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ABSTRACT

This publication contains a collection of teaching ideas and class activities for organization, journals, dictation, creative writing, outlines, poetry, vocabulary, film review word cards, paragraphing, career research and much more. Some of the materials, listed with their authors, include: (1) "Magazine Board" (Frieda Owen); (2) "Survival" (Robert E. Coleman); (3) "Lazy Learning Center" (Norma Smith); (4) "Guided Fantasy" (Susan Metz); (5) "Comic Book Lit" (Jeffrey Paul Jones); (6) "Coffeehouse" (Renee Campbell); (7) "Mail Call" (Polly Duncan); and (8) "Teen Town" (Jean Dahling). (MS)

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Animal Farm

Paul Schluntz, Wilton, Ct.

To help students understand the problems inherent in creating and implementing a new government, as the characters attempted to do in George Orwell"s Animal Farm, the existing political structure of two eighth grade classrooms was removed for two weeks. Students were given an understandable, obtainable goal--to prepare for a test on the story using techniques they had used several times already that year; most students in both classes were highly motivated and eager to earn a high test grade. However, the decisions about utilization of class time were not made by the teacher; responsibility was handed to all students equally, just as the animals had received responsibility for Animal Farm after Jones was ejected. The teacher chose this technique to teach students firsthand one of George Orwell's primary messages about the use and abuse of power.

The day before the unit was to begin, the teacher distributed copies of the book and copies of a letter to students which stated the following points:

- The usual structure of a classroom is dictatorship.
- The usual structure often leads to frustration and discontent because the majority is not in control.
- For the next two weeks, the teacher will step down and hand control to the majority.
- After two weeks, the teacher will resume the usual role and administer a test on the book very similar to the other literature tests which have been given this year.
- Meanwhile, the majority's goals are to prepare themselves and their fellow students for this test, using the previously taught study guide system.

For the next two weeks, the teacher sat in the back of the classroom, observing and recording "majority" activities and behavior. As promised, a test was then administered. The day following the test, the teacher distributed copies of the log which he had kept for 14 days; students worked in small groups, preparing reports to the class which attempted to explain the causes of important recorded behaviors. Meanwhile, the teacher asked each student to compile a chart describing the various roles he plays in an average day, such as student, son or daughter, brother or sister, friend, and so on. Students tried to describe differences in their behavior as they fulfilled different roles, thereby leading them to realize that each person changes his behavior according to the role he is assuming at the moment.

Before the unit ended, several outcomes developed through the reports of small groups and the ensuing large-group discussions.

1. Most students realized that the "democratic" setting called upon them to modify their classroom role; some students did so and some did not.
2. Almost all students stated that they felt uncomfortable with the lack of dictatorial structure during the two-week unit.
3. Students agreed that one class had organized themselves to a degree, while the other class never achieved any permanent organizational plan.
4. The unorganized group recognized the fact that they knew how to organize but that their suspicions of one another's motives in attempting to assume leadership prevented progress.
5. The class which had some success with organization earned test scores comparable with those on earlier literature tests.
6. The unorganized class earned test scores which were lower than those on earlier tests.

To conclude the project, each class discussed ways in which the situation could have been handled more effectively than it was, and why these strategies were not used by students during the unit.

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Magazine Board

Frieda Owen, Parkersburg, WV

Your bulletin board can be a decorator item or a teaching tool, a work of art or a catchall. But for the writing teacher, the bulletin board can be a class literary magazine or an interclass newspaper.

Transform your bulletin board into a magazine with mass audience appeal and total market coverage...

. Use art, graphics, and typography to capture attention, to lead the reader to the text.
. Position bulletin boards in prime locations, where traffic moves freely without tieups.
. For more bulletin space, use standing screens and walls.
. Divide large boards into sections for a cover story, news, articles, editorials, humor. Use string, ribbon, colored paper as dividers.
. Position papers, art, and graphics horizontally and vertically in neat, rectangular modules. Collages are out in today's magazine design.
. Every magazine board needs a headline or title. Often the assignment, printed in large letters with felt tip markers, can be the headline.
. Illustrate your magazine board with appropriate pictures, or ask students to bring pictures or artwork to illustrate their stories.
. Don't restrict student writers to notebook or theme paper. Encourage them to present poems as posters, figurative language as bumper stickers.
. The magazine board is not a display case. Stories, poems, essays are there to be read. Do not display spelling papers and test papers.
. Present longer papers--library reports, research papers--in envelope packets so they can be removed for reading, then returned.
. Notify students before posting their writing. Announce in advance that an assignment is intended for the magazine board, or get the student's permission to"publish."
. Be sure all copy is edited and proofread before it is posted.
. Do not display grades.
. Plan writing assignments specifically for the magazine board. Let students brainstorm themes and cover story ideas.
. Do not restrict writing to creative writing. Ask students to write informative articles on "How to diagram a sentence," "How to recognize an adverb," "How to read a short story, " "How to study for a test."
. Keep a glue box with felt tip markers, thumb tacks, scissors, stapler, glue, string, ribbon, construction paper.
. Discover...that students' magazine boards outsell teachers' bulletin boards!

Money to earn

Rebecca Lawson, Taylorsville, Ky.

Seventh and eighth grade English teachers in our school have quite a problem impressing their students with the necessity of coming to class prepared to work. They consistently arrive without book, pencil, paper, or homework. These teachers also teach a practical arts class which is responsible for the idea of teaching responsibility by using the world of work. This plan also works as an incentive for completing homework, participating in oral class activities and getting to class on time.

First, $100,000 in play money was bought and duplicated so the background would be different from other play money. It was then announced that each student was on salary of $25 per week. Payday was Friday. To receive full salary, students would have to come to class ready to work each day of the week. They

are fined for forgetting book, pencil, or paper; for having incomplete or no homework; for being tardy; and for improper classroom behavior.

Since working conditions are duplicated as much as practical, a method of earning overtime or extra money must be provided. Making a grade of 100% on a test, answering questions in class, and extra-credit work are three means of increasing the amount the student receives on payday. The classroom answers and extra credit work must be correct in order to receive the credit.

Both fines and money are recorded daily on a chart. On Friday, accounts are balanced and students paid.

As in the world of work, the student's salary must have purchasing power or it becomes valueless. At the end of a specified period of time, a flea market is held in the English class. Items for sale are donated by both teacher and students. They may be purchased only by money earned in class.

Students have responded by being both punctual and prepared. We judge this plan to be successful.

survival

Robert E. Coleman, Southbury, Ct.

This method has been used successfully with classes of disruptive and emotionally disturbed students. I think that it has appeal to the wider school population. It provides a feeling of acceptance and importance for the student, and it eliminates much of the tedious testing the teacher experiences early in the year. Further, it sets a tone for the class which I have found lasts for the entire year.

Conduct a guided imagery in which the student imagines the perfect classroom. Aid him in his discovery with appropriate questions. Help him to identify his feelings as he approaches the classroom. How is he greeted by the teacher? What are the looks on the faces of his classmates as he enters? What goes on in the room? How is it decorated? How is he evaluated?

When the guided imagery is finished, provide students with magic markers and a roll of paper. Have them in silence write down single words or phrases that occurred to them during the imagery. Switch colors frequently so that ideas are not identified too easily. Encourage students to add to previous ideas. Expect only a reasonable period of silence. Silliness often takes over as students react to the humorous remarks of others. Be prepared for an occasional obscene statement about the school in general.

Have students group ideas in logical patterns. Usually three or four general categories emerge. Still using the roll of paper and the magic markers, have the students formulate a rule statement which contains all of the elements in the grouping. Tape the entire sheet to the wall for several weeks as a reminder to all. When things are not going too well later in the year, take it out and tape it up again. It is a good way to start some honest communication.

Only the educated are free.
—Epictetus

Organizing

Patricia Stuart, Milwaukee, WI.

Keeping material organized for several similar classes taught in the same semester can take time away from the teacher. One technique which has been useful in keeping material organized involves color-coding material for each class. One color is designated for each class. Each color then is used for a three-ring binder, a fish net to display class work, and a backdrop for special class announcements. Each class is aware of its color and should be able to check its color-coded work.

The first color-coded item is the class three-ring binder. This is kept by the teacher for each class. Within the binder, pertinent material is organized in three sections. The first is composed of a diary of the work presented each day: work collected, discussed, assigned, etc. The second contains a copy of class notes for each day. (Each day one student is assigned to make a carbon copy of his/her class notes to keep in that particular class's binder.) The third section of the binder consists of copies of all handouts given to the students. Using this system, students who have been absent or have questions regarding a particular aspect of a task may refer to the class binder for clarification.

The second color-coded item is colored fish net. These nets, color-coded to each class, can be used on the walls to display the work of the class. This is an inexpensive, colorful way to add display area for assignments.

Finally, construction paper, color-coded, can be used as a backing for special class notes or reminders within the room.

These are only a few applications of this system. The possibilities for its use are limitless.

LAZY LEARNING CENTER

Norma Smith, Ravena, N.Y.

Use an extra bulletin board, chalkboard, wall, or floor.

Quickly write your activity on large construction paper or use extra workbook pages, sample copies, old Highlight pages, zealous advertising, etc.

Arrange these on the wall and cover the whole thing with clear plastic. (It is sold in 12 ft. widths at hardware stores and costs less than 15¢ per linear foot.)

Give the children overhead pens, plastic markers, or markers for white "blackboards" and let them have a ball.

The first one finished with an activity (correctly or corrected) can check the others when they finish. The whole thing can be erased with an old mitten, towel, or sponge. We have sock puppets that do the cleaning and an ear syringe to squirt a little water for pens.

This is very good for watching a child's attack skills because his back is to you. He/she will be unaware of observation. Formation of letters in penmanship is easily seen.

Keep a file,by months, of those ideas clipped from professional magazines that have an illustration and short directions. Put them on a sheet of oaktag to give the children ideas for extra time.

If you have a work sheet that can't be duplicated, put it on a clipboard, cover it with acetate, and pass it around. (X-ray machines sometimes eject clear film. Use plastic crayons.)

JOURNALS

Jackie Schmitt, Newburgh, IN.

While requiring journals is not innovative, I am pleased with this adaptation of journal-keeping. I ask my students to divide their medium-sized notebook into a front and back section. The front section is to be their section. They are to make at least two dated entries a week. This section is to be a statement about them, of what is important to them, of what fascinates them, etc. I also make suggestions for entries and each time I pick them up, I share what others are doing. The following are some of my suggestions:

- Clip articles and react to them
- Include poems, yours or someone else's
- Record dreams and think about why you might have dreamed them
- Note favorite sayings
- Paste together collages of the year, of your likes, dislikes, concerns
- Save words to favorite songs, poetry put to music
- Make goals, plans for the future
- Add pictures of people, places, and written descriptions of them from your perspective
- Ask questions
- Record insights, advice, knowledge that makes sense to you
- Write of memories, special moments, significant events
- Discuss issues, fears, wants, needs,
- Make lists of your pet peeves, traits you want in a future partner, etc.
- Write your own definitions of words

I'm always impressed by their own ideas for entries. I grade this section on their effort and variety. Diary entries are not permitted unless the event is significant. Journals can be picked up any Monday, so they must stay up to date. If students want me to read and respond to any entry, they are to place a check next to the date; otherwise, I will skim, but not read, their front entries. I must admit, however, that I read more than I originally plan because I find them so interesting. I particularly like the opportunity for one to make contact. When students have the chance to exhibit some of their own special interests and talents, ones often uncalled for by the teacher, they can show unusual perception and depth. I find myself gaining new respect for them. Because I have been so impressed with some of their entries, I have reserved the back blackboard and a portion of my bulletin board for students to share entries or topics with each other.

The back section, on the other hand, is at my direction. This is my way of giving the students more writing experiences than I could possibly grade, opportunities to experiment without the fear of a bad grade, and practice at in-class writing with a limited amount of time. I try to make directed assignments about twice a week. They are always done in the first 15-20 minutes of class. Often the assignment is on the board so they can get started right away. It is a good way to begin class quickly and quietly. The assignments are usually related to the unit on which we are currently working, although occasionally I will include a response to a current event, national, local, or in the school. (For a unit in character description, I might ask them to describe the perfect teacher. For a school assembly on science fiction, I might ask them to take one area such as transportation and fantasize about the future possibilities.) At the end of the grading period, the students are asked to choose a specific number of entries for me to evaluate although all are checked for effort. While students are not asked to rewrite these, they are expected to read back through them to polish up their grammar. I want them to realize that being careful is an important habit to develop.

JOURNALS

Karen Roberts, Vancouver, BC

You have just been told that you can take 10 friends out for your birthday. Where would you go and why?

You have been asked to advise the teachers of your school on noon-hour activities. What would you suggest? Explain your choices.

If you could be any age you wanted, how old would you choose to be? Explain.

If you could design your own after-school job, what would it be? Why would this job interest and suit you?

You are in a foreign country. You do not speak the language. Explain how you finally learn to communicate.

Describe the qualities of a perfect brother or sister.

Describe the perfect vacation. Where would you go and what would you do?

You have suddenly become a famous rock star. How would your life change?

If you could be any person in the whole world, who would you like to be. Why?

If your TV was in the shop for repairs for a week, how would you spend your time?

You have the power to change an event in history. Which one would you choose and what would you do?

Write diary entries for a week from your pet's point of view.

You have the power to change one thing in your community. What would it be and what would you do?

Your mother and dad have been away on a holiday. They are not supposed to be home for another week, but they phone from the airport and will be home in half an hour. The house is a mess. What will you do?

You have been granted a wish to become talented in any area you choose. What area would it be and how would you develop your talent?

Tell about something you really dislike doing but must do. What could you do to make it a more pleasant task.

How many ways could you ask your parents for their permission to go to the movies. Describe them.

If you were moving away, what five things would you take with you and why?

You are trapped in an elevator. Describe how you feel and how you would handle the situation.

If you had your choice of any animal in the world for a pet, which one would you choose and how would you talk your parents into letting you have it?

Imagine you are a scientist a thousand years from now. You have the power to change a human being to make it a more interesting animal. What changes would you make?

Maureen Neuman, North Vancouver BC

You have found a magic mirror that reflects the future. What does it show you doing 10 years from now?

You are an archaeologist in the future and have found a golf club from the 20th century. You have never seen one before. Describe how to use it.

You are lost in a strange new city. You don't have a dime but would like to call home for help. How do you solve your problem?

You have found a bottle on the beach containing the last pages from a log book from a ship that was wrecked. What entries appear on those pages?

You have eaten a tablet which will increase your intelligence. You have the intellectual capacity to become a member of any profession you choose. What would you become and what would you do?

If you could be your favorite TV character who would you be? Tell why.

If humans were nocturnal creatures, how would our lives be different?

You have been asked to replace Merv Griffin on his TV talk show. Who would you invite as your guests and why?

It is your turn to plan dinner for your family. You would like to make it a meal they won't forget. What do you plan and how is the meal presented?

You have been given an opportunity to act as the principal of your school for a day. What would you do and why?

You are an old tire that has just been deposited in a dump. Tell your life story.

You have just found the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Tell how you did it.

Like Lucy in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe you have travelled through a magic cupboard to a strange land. You are greeted by a faun who asks you to tea. Would you go with him? Explain why you would or would not.

You have discovered a magic pebble. Tell what it can do and how you will use it.

You have been given a large piece of magic cloth. Describe how you will use it.

Darth Vader has just paid you a visit. Describe your encounter with him.

You have no bones. Describe how your life would be different.

You have the ability to leave the earth's surface. Where would you go and what would your trip be like?

You are an extra-terrestrial being on your first visit to earth. Describe what you look like or tell about the purpose of your mission.

Describe how life on earth would be different if the sun never rose.

If you had the ability to become invisible, tell when you would use this power and why.

If you awakened one morning to find that all people looked alike, explain how you would gradually learn to distinguish one person from another.

If you could have all the knowledge in the world by swallowing one tiny capsule, tell what you would do instead of attending school.

You hear a munching sound in your closet. What could it be and what would you do?

You are the teacher for today. What would you plan for the day's activities and why?

What if there were a power "blackout" for a week? What problems would it cause for you and how would you deal with them?

You have the "Midas touch" for one day. Everything you touch turns to gold. Describe that day.

You have been invited to go to outer space as the assistant to an astronaut. Describe the duties of your office.

You have a chance to visit Fantasy Island. Describe your fantasy.

What if the government gave your school $10,000? How would you spend these funds so that all the students would benefit?

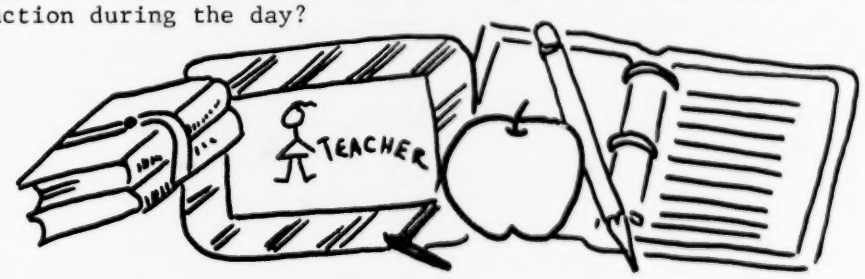
What if you could turn off Niagara Falls? Tell what would happen to the cities nearby.

What if man and whales could understand each other? Write a conversation you think they might have.

You have been given a pair of magic glasses. What makes them "magic?" How do they change the way you see the world?

You are a zoo keeper and have been asked to determine the weight of one of the elephants. How would you do it?

Your teacher has just lost his/her voice. How might you help him/her function during the day?



DICTATION

Georgianna Robbins, Hillsboro, Ohio

This plan is a week-long activity. Monday the words are introduced. Wednesday spelling compositions are due. Friday students write the dictation.

The spelling compositions are done in manuscript form and must use at least 25 of the 28 words in each spelling unit. Spelling words must be underlined. This allows for an easier count in grading and identifies those words the teacher does not provide during the dictation. It is just as successful to specify the type of composition as it is to grant a free choice. This idea also works well if the teacher specifies use of a grammatical element being studied or reviewed. These compositions are graded, and certain ones selected for dictation.

Friday is the big day. Students are keen to know whose dictation has been chosen. There is no reason to fear that the writer holds an unfair advantage writing his own dictation because the opposite is more often true. Those that tease the teacher have also been beneficial in showing the student a positive way of venting aggression.

Desks are cleared of everything except the paper needed for the dictation. First, the entire dictation is read. Students are instructed to listen for the gist of the composition. The next step is to read the entire sentence. No writing should be done till the third step when the sentence is broken into phrases.Student attention spans will be able to cope with three-word phrases at first, but this will expand to eight or nine words later in the year. Because everyone's train of thought is vital to success. students who blurt out are brought under immediate peer pressure. Students with questions raise their hands. Questions are answered only when the teacher sees all students have stopped writing. The end-of-the-year goal is to have no questions. A student who does not remember a word leaves a blank and listens for the word when the entire sentence is repeated. If a word is used in the phrase that has not been presented in class, a student raises his hand and the word is written on the board. Students must ask though. This is where the value of having had the spelling words underlined is readily apparent. The teacher may also volunteer certain punctuation marks that have not been studied. Each sentence in the dictation follows the pattern of being read in its entirety, read in phrases, and then reread in its entirety.

Students become more accountable as the year progresses.For instance, paragraphs may be identified by the teacher at the start of the year; later the student accepts responsibility for knowing where they should be. Commas are another instance. The teacher may provide a count of punctuation marks and paragraphs as a guide.

Once the entire dictation has been covered in the sentence-phrase-sentence pattern, the entire dictation is repeated. Students proofread their own papers. Their biggest problem will be words omitted and incorrect syllable division.

Following this first proofreading, the papers are exchanged for yet another proofreading. This is completely non-verbal. Any suspected errors are circled, and then the paper is returned to the writer. Since he bears full responsibility for the paper, only he may make changes. He may check any words by using the dictionary, not the spelling list.

Grading the dictations is not a great chore. The easiest way is to deduct three points for any error. Having a different dictation for each section helps relieve teacher boredom, too.

Papers are returned the following Monday. Those who receive a perfect paper are allowed to eat a lollipop during class since they have obviously "licked their spelling faults." Furthermore, any student with a perfect paper receives automatic credit for having done a perfect rewrite.

Rewrites are mimeod and distributed for each spelling unit. Thus, many students are "published" each year. Be sure to give a byline on the rewrite

and allow extra copies. Grading for the rewrite is more severe. Deduct ten points for each error. Since dictation and rewrite carry equal weight, students who work are rewarded. Capable students can grade rewrites satisfactorily.

The problem of makeups is easily solved with a cassette recorder that has a counter. The start and end numbers of each recorded makeup are noted on the cassette. Recordings are also good to use if the teacher must be absent since, it does not work well to have someone else do the dictation. During the recording the teacher shuts off the machine at the end of each phrase. This click signals the student to shut off the machine until he is ready to proceed. The makeup also has a rewrite.

All rewrites for a unit are filed for later reference.

The first year of this plan is the hardest. For instance, students will bemoan the novelty, wail about cruel and unusual punishment. Recording makeups does take extra time; however, these cassettes last for years. Actually, the greatest problem is grading all these compositions. To solve this problem, students may write one for extra credit or the teacher can create one.

The rewards of this system exceed the problems. A number of students have returned to say that these spelling compositions really got them started writing. Second, parents and subsequent teachers pay high tribute to the skills these students have gained from the experience of the generated spelling essay dictation.

DICTATION PLUS

Sue Hahn, Hastings, Minn.

At least once during Basic English, you will be required to get up in front of the class and give a dictation. Your teacher has been giving dictations to you of the kinds of sayings to use and the method of delivery.

Your first step is to locate an appropriate saying to use as your dictation. These sayings have various names: epigram, aphorism, proverb, witticism.

Do NOT just choose the first saying you happen to find. Do some searching and choose the best one you can find. Choose a saying that is appropriate and relevant to your audience. Choose a saying that has meaning; one that not only makes a point but a point worth thinking about. The saying should be memorable and worth remembering. It should express a provoking idea that trails after the words and remains in the mind.

There are many books in our school library which are useful for sayings. Reference books such as Bartlett's Book of Familiar Quotations and The Home Book of Quotations are good choices.

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS

Locate an appropriate saying.

On a half sheet of paper write out the following information:

- Write out the saying (copy correctly. Accuracy in spelling and punctuation is critical.
- Write out the source of the quotation--who originally said it or wrote it. (Use anonymous or unknown if no source is given.)
- Write where you found the saying. Give the title, author, and page number of the book. (underline the book title.)
- Write a brief explanation (use sentences!) of WHY you chose this particular saying. (Be sure to state clearly the reason for your choice. Do NOT make your reason "It was short." "It was the first one I found." "It was easy." Do not explain the meaning of the saying for this item.

Turn in the half sheet two days before your scheduled dictation to receive advance approval. (Keep a copy for yourself to read from in front of the class.

Deliver your dictation orally on your scheduled day. If you are not ready, your mark will be 0. If you are absent, expect to deliver your dictation the day you return.

Collect the papers from students who have written the dictation. Mark them carefully. Count one point off for each error and assign a score based on ten points possible. (You may use correction symbols.) Return the corrected papers to the teacher within two class days.

EVALUATION

There are 50 points possible for the dictation which you deliver. Your score will be the result of three evaluation areas:

1. 10 points--the written half sheet you turn in (meeting advance requirement--points taken off if late--completeness; accuracy; statement of reason; neatness; appropriateness of saying)
2. 12 points--the actual delivery of your dictation (volume, projection, rate, enunciation, pronunciation, eye contact, pauses, pitch, reading in sense units, etc.--all the things which make for a good speech/oral presentation.
3. 24 points--the kind of correcting job which you do (your teacher will go back through the marked papers and any errors you missed on the marking will be deducted from your score; also, point deduction if papers aren't marked and returned to the teacher within the time limit of two days.)

BONUS POINTS--You may earn bonus points by doing a little extra as part of your oral presentation. Some possibilities are to tell about the author of the dictation and/or lead a brief discussion on any difficult ideas in the dictation. Confer with your teacher in advance if you have other ideas about possibilities for earning bonus points.

MYSTERY MAKE

Jacqueline M. Farrell, New Milford, CT.

I. Choose a detective

Suggestions:

- Suzie Simpson--a resourceful 7th grade student
- Detective Oscar Oliver--a sloppy but observant detective
- Captain Sherlock Hobart--an English detective who thinks he's Sherlock Holmes
- Detective Elizabeth Smith--a well-organized police detective
- Absent-minded Arthur Ames--a detective who is always getting his clues mixed
- Felix Fudgely--a curious, nosy person who is always watching TV detective shows and thinks he is the neighborhood detective
- Mrs. Amanda Bizebe--an 85-year-old grandmother who likes skateboarding and detective shows
- Howard Hoopster--a 7th grade basketball star who likes solving mysteries
- Casey Martle--a 12-year-old super sleuth

II. Choose a setting

Suggestions:

haunted house	tennis court	school locker room
classroom	sailboat	abandoned barn
old farmhouse	school cafeteria	island in the middle of the lake
gym	new, raised ranch	

III. Choose a clue or two

Suggestions:

Suggestions:

half-eaten sandwich	crumpled piece of paper	footsteps in the mud
a sneaker with a hole	a broken chair	a dirty baseball cap
a torn rug	a dead cactus plant	a desk with writing on it and ink spots inside
a deflated volleyball	a broken necklace	
a puddle	a lost glove	a broken window
a piece of soap	some seashells	a torn jacket missing a button

IV. Mix well with vivid adjectives, specific nouns, action verbs, complete sentences, and punctuation.

Note to the teacher: The completed mini-mysteries may be used in several ways. The mysteries may be reproduced and compiled as a class anthology so that the students may read and solve each other's mysteries. Or you may have a mystery of the day with one student reading his/her mystery aloud each day. The best mysteries should be submitted for national publications for middle school students.

Room-y Writing

Barbara Rose, E. Freetown, MA

While students always have a fairly easy time dealing with setting, they frequently find the concept of atmosphere too abstract. To treat atmosphere as a literary device and especially to show its relevance to theme and characterization, I use a very concrete approach to eliminate the vagueness students associate with atmosphere and to encourage students to recognize atmosphere as an integral element in literature.

From a variety of magazines I cut out pictures of rooms, making sure that there are no people in these pictures. I always use a wide range of rooms, everything from ultra-modern chrome-and-glass living rooms that look as if they would be better suited to 2181 AD moonscape to real down-home kitchens so prevalent in modern advertising. I assign a different picture to each student who then has to prepare a brief statement about the person or persons he imagines occupying that room.

The first time I gave this assignment, I anticipated some fairly pedestrian responses; to my surprise, I received detailed analyses of the hypothetical inhabitants of the rooms--everything from occupations to drinking habits to educational backgrounds to political leanings. Students quickly became quite adept at getting an overall "feeling" from the rooms they looked at and were able to make extremely perceptive inferences about the types of people who might inhabit them.

From this simple assignment students have become more aware of the subtle details writers use to create atmospheres that are consistent with their characters and themes. They understand how an atmosphere can be cold and hostile, comfortable and warm, distant and unfeeling, or negative and depressing.

I might add that they also enjoy this diversion.

Guided Fantasy

Susan Metz, Brooklyn, NY

I have used this technique to motivate writing and literature. It should be preceded by a discussion of creativity--why it is so important and why it is rarely emphasized in school. Trust must be established before students will feel comfortable relaxing and following the suggestions of the teacher. This experience was used to introduce The Pearl. It is transcribed here as it was presented to the class.

"Everyone please clear your desks of all books. Leave only one sheet of paper and your pen within reach. Get very comfortable in your seat--loosen any tight belts so that you can really breathe.

"Now that you are comfortable, try to shift your attention away from outside events and into yourself. See if you can become aware of any part of your body that is tense. Try to relax it. If it doesn't loosen, tighten in as much as you can and THEN release. Notice any differences in temperature over your body. When you are ready, allow your eyes to come quietly to closing. Let them open and close a few times until you can keep them closed and concentration is completely inside yourself.

""Now readjust to make yourself more comfortable and relaxed. Put your head down if you want to, but don't go to sleep. Just relax. Become aware of your breathing. Imagine that each exhalation takes out some more tension and leaves you more calm and peaceful. Watch the air coming in and out of your body for a moment. Now become aware of your thoughts. Don't get involved in any one thought, but let it slip out as it slipped in. Another will take its place. Imagine that you put each thought into a pitcher. Put this one in. Now the next. And the next. Now pour all those thoughts down the drain so that your mind is open and clear.

"Can you imagine that you are sitting in the most comfortable spot at home? You're just relaxing when you realize that there is someone outside the door, in the hall. It is a messenger who rings the bell. Imagine how excited you feel as you get up to open the door. What does the messenger look like? What is the person wearing? This person has come with a box for you--a surprise gift that you have always wanted. What size is the box? Can you see its shape? How heavy is it as you take the box and put it down on the floor or on the table? Examine the box in detail for a moment.

"Of course, you are dying to open the box and see exactly what is inside. So you do. How do you feel as you discover what you have received? Pick it up and turn it over so that you can see every detail of this new treasure. What does the texture feel like? What color is it? How was your present wrapped? Explore as many details as possible of your gift.

"Now you become aware that you would like to share your good fortune. Will you take it out or have someone come over to your house? What is your friends' reaction? Spend a few minutes talking about what you will do with your present and how you think it will change your life.

"In a moment I am going to ask you to return to the classroom and write about your experience. Spend a moment saying goodbye to your friend or friends and put the present back in the box. Return to your seat at home. I'm going to ask you to open your eyes and write your experiences in the first person present tense (I am sitting in the living room...). We will write for ten minutes so include as many details of your experience as you can. Don't worry about finishing. Just write. Now, when you are ready, open your eyes and write."

If one grammar point was stressed in previous lessons (paragraphing, agreement, etc.) papers can be read for that technical aspect. But I prefer as little judgment as possible. The next session can be used for some sort of sharing which will lead to composition or literature.

BLUE GOOP

George Edmondson, Arroyo Grande CA

Don't tell how to make it until the assignment is over!

Directions: Mix 2 cups cornstarch with enough cold water (about a cup) to make a mixture that looks creamy but feels semi-hard when poked with a fork. You may add food color. It will last for a day or two, covered, stored at room temperature.

Prewriting: Allow as many students as you can to see it, smell it, and poke it. Assure students that even though it may look unusual, it is something that all of them have eaten. Assure them that it will easily wash off their hands if they would like to feel it. Put your own hands into it. All the while this is happening, ask the students for words which would describe it. Have one secretary put the words on the board, another copy the words on a sheet of paper.

For elementary grades:

The Blue Goop Prewriting Experience could be used as a springboard for a unit on adjectives (many of the words on the board will be adjectives describing goop.) The students could be given sentences with blanks where the adjectives would fit:

The _____, _____ goop fell through my hand.

The goop in the bowl was _____and _____.

The same writing assignment given to junior high and high school can be given to the elementary grades.

For junior high and high school:

After listing the words on the chalkboard the first day, the teacher may ask students to recall the words the following day (show the Blue Goop again). If the students don't remember all the words that were on the chalkboard, fill in the rest from the secretary's list.

Tell the students for their writing assignment, they will have to use a certain number of the words on the board. Allow them to choose between factual writing and creative writing.

For factual writing they are to write exactly what happened in class the previous day concerning the Blue Goop. Encourage students to use their personal reactions concerning the goop.

For creative writing ask the students to think of a magical, unusual quality the Blue Goop could have. Perhaps it could give you the power of Superman. It could make whoever touches it grow or shrink. Maybe it eats people! What if you were walking up to your house and you saw it seeping out from under the front door. Those especially creative people can have a ball with this!

PERSONALITY BOX

Tanya Nalisnik, Los Angeles, CA

Rationale for students: To help you focus on the skills you already possess, the personal goals you should set for yourself, and possible career choices, you will construct a personality box. This box will reflect you in many different ways. Reading, writing, and speaking--basic English skills--are practical tools you will need to secure jobs and to get ahead in the future. To help you develop oral communication skills, you will be asked to deliver a speech on the topic of your choice.

PERSONALITY BOX

A. Select a box (the size is your choice) and cover it completely with white paper (or the collages you make may cover the box adequately). Each side of the box, including the lid, will be designed in the following way. Pictures will be used to illustrate the following:

1. Your present skills
   (For example, reading and writing well, the ability to make things, playing an instrument, drawing, expressing your ideas orally, leadership qualities, etc.)
2. Hobbies and interests
3. Personality traits and moods
   (For example, moody, cheerful, helpful, alert, independent, punctual, hard-working, indecisive, careless, outgoing, shy, respectful of property, etc.)
4. Five people you admire
   (All of us look up to certain people because we admire qualities in them. For you, are these people your friends, parents, historical figures, sports figures, actors, actresses, teachers, other adults?)

Box lid:
Pictures illustrating possible career choices and personal goals (school, relationships with family, friends, teachers)

B. To illustrate these items, you are to make a collage of magazine pictures, words, drawings, and photos. Each side should be labeled as to what it represents. The lid should include your first name.

C. FILL the box with items that represent something about your life. These objects may relate to the pictures you used in the collages. For example, to represent skill in playing tennis, you might include a tennis ball. To represent a trip to London, you might include a postcard. A pillbox filled with dust might represent a messy room, and a watch might represent your punctuality. If the item is too large for the box, use a picture of it. Fill the box with at least seven items. On the inside of the lid, paste a sheet of paper listing the items and giving a short explanation of their significance to you.

D. Use your imagination in creating your box!

SPEECH--For your oral presentation to the class, you are to select one of the items from your personality box and develop a speech around this item. The topics are endless. You may choose to explain how to do something, inform the class about one of your hobbies or interests, relate an amusing anecdote about yourself, or explain one of your career choices. The speech must be well-written, paying close attention to having an exciting opening. The length of the speech must be 3 to 5 minutes. A visual aid must be included.

After completing both of these assignments, you should have a better awareness of the skills you now possess, future goals you want to achieve, and possible career options open to you.

Poetry is a way of taking life by the throat.

—Robert Frost

Outline

Tia Kraus, Quincy, CA

DIRECTIONS: Put the following words into an outline, using Roman numerals, large letters, small numbers, and small letters. Then answer the questions about the finished outline. Not everyone's outline will look the same.

wild cats	parrots	tigers
guppies	spaniels	Siamese cats
canaries	collies	angelfish
sport fish	shorthaired cats	Labrador retriever
show dogs	cheetahs	African tiger
longhaired cats	sharks	lynx
Springer spaniel	cocker spaniel	neon fish
poodles	birds	retrievers
parakeets	domestic fish	German shepherd
tuna	cats	Golden retriever
Australian shepherd	Himalayan cat	trout
common grey cat	bobcats	miniature poodles
lions	standard poodles	fish
working dogs	domestic cats	Bengal tiger
shepherds	salmon	dogs

1. Which major portion of the outline is not detailed enough and should be left out or revised?
2. Which section is the most detailed.
3. What might you title this outline?

Whodunnit?

Doug Knight, Bath, ME

Materials: colored construction paper--cut out large three-toed footprints, writing paper, pens, empty milk carton and cookie or candy bar wrapper

Procedure: When students are out of the room, the teacher should arrange the footprints on the floor, tables, or ceiling, and end at an open window with empty carton and wrapper on counter. Allow the students to explore, instruct them to be detectives. Write a story involving as many clues as they can find (size of footprints, etc.). They should use imagination to describe the creature, tell why it was here, where it went, etc...

Turn of the Screw

Irene L. Bush, Fort Lauderdale, FLA

Choose one of the following hypothetical situations and write your version of what happened at Bly. Keep in mind the facts of the story and write only that which will agree with these facts or will seem a natural development of the plot. Tailor your writing style to fit the point-of-view character that you choose.

1. You are the governess. Because of your master's stern admonition not to trouble him with the affairs of his wards, you are reluctant to call on him to explain the circumstances leading up to Flora's illness and Miles' death; instead you have written him a letter.
   Task: Write this letter, bearing in mind that it is natural for anyone to justify his own actions.
2. You are Flora. You have been brought to your uncle's townhouse in London. How will you explain to your uncle the events at Bly which led to your illness and your being brought to London by Mrs. Grose?
   Task: If you choose to have Flora speak directly to her uncle, write your account of their meeting in narrative form as if it were a continuation of the story. Do not use the dramatic form of a play. Or, if you choose to have her uncle absent, let Flora write him a letter in her own "charming" manner.
3. You are Mrs. Grose. You have just arrived at your master's townhouse in London. How will you explain the events leading up to Flora's illness and your bringing her to London and leaving Miles under the care of the governess at Bly?
   Task: If you choose to have Mrs. Grose speak directly to her master, write an account of their meeting in narrative form as if it were a continuation of the story. Do not use the dramatic form of a play. Or, if you choose to have the master absent, let Mrs. Grose dictate her report to his private secretary.
4. You are a reporter from the London Times. Word has reached you of the strange death of a ward of Mr. _____ of Harley Street, London. You have gone to his country place in Essex to find out the facts of the death.
   Task: Write an article for your newspaper explaining the facts of the strange death. Be sure to satisfy the who, what, when, where, why, and how questions of journalistic writing.

DREAMS

Shirley S. Stevens, Leetsdale, PA

Teacher background: Read "The Dream Device in Fiction," The Writer (Feb. 1980) pp. 22-4. In this article Frances Shine explains how she develops dreams for her fictional characters. She also mentions Cathy's dream in Wuthering Heights and the Virginian's in Owen Wister's novel.

Warmup-- Rorschach, first person

The student may read a variety of literature ranging from "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" to a Poe tale to the novel Crime and Punishment.(I did the assignment with an AP class reading Dostoevsky, but the assignment can be adapted.)

Explain the Rorschach test technique.

Have students create a Rorschach ink blot with ink and a folded piece of yellow tablet paper held over the waste basket. The creator and two other students write first-person responses to the ink blot as if they were the character in the work they just read. Students share the results in their

groups, then report on how well they were able to maintain first-person point of view. Students revise and recopy. Display on bulletin board.

DREAM CREATION: Read Raskolnikov's first two dreams and invent a dream which he might have after the murder.

first person creative reflection

a. Examine the events and symbols in the two dreams which Dostoevsky created.
b. Discuss the article on dreams from The Writer.
c. Draft a dream which incorporates some of the details from Raskolnikov's environment and from the scene of the murder.
d. Share the drafts and respond to them.
e. Revise and share with the class.
f. Conference with teacher. Compare dream with Dostoevsky's and with classmates'

ANALYTICAL ESSAY: The AP class will reread the four dreams which Dostoevsky created for Raskolnikov and discuss similarities and contrasts.

a. What events precede each dream?
b. What happens in each dream?
c. What are the symbols in each dream?
d. What parallels relate all four dreams?
e. In partnerships, compare notes.
f. Draft a thesis.
g. Write an introductory paragraph. Share it with a classmate and the teacher.
h. Revise opening paragraph.
i. Write the first complete draft. Share it with 2 classmates.
j. Conference with teacher.
k. Write final draft.

dictionary doing

Susanne Whitbeck, Andover, NH

As a variation to the standard vocabulary lists, I sometimes have my students create their own hard cover dictionaries. They first choose a book from their independent reading and then select a certain number of words from it depending on their age and ability. After I've checked the list, the students look the words up in the dictionary and copy the syllabication, definition, and part of speech. They are usually required to write sentences for a certain number of words also.

Once this has been done and checked, they are ready to make their dictionaries. With the usual supply of cloth, wallpaper, etc., we make books and copy the dictionary work into them. Students usually copy their work onto the pages before binding to avoid having to dismantle the entire book if a mistake is made. Many students choose to make their books in sizes and shapes that correspond to the book which they had used to find the words. I have had books shaped like baseballs, ice cream cones, and haunted houses. Most children happily illustrate their dictionaries and those not adept at drawing can find pictures in magazines and neatly cut and paste them into their books.

There are many ways to modify this project. However, I have found that if the students are allowed to pick a book that they are comfortable with they take great pride in their work. It is a good project for practice in dictionary skills and also a pleasant experience for those who enjoy making books but are not particularly strong in creative writing.

Comic Book Lit

Jeffrey Paul Jones, Vista, CA

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide a concise historical view of a specific literary genre.
2. Introduce the basic elements of literature: plot, character, theme, setting, and point of view.
3. Introduce advertising techniques as they apply to magazines.
4. Introduce correspondence with publishers through "Letters to the Editor."

PREPARATION

1. Research the history of the genre. I suggest All in Color for a Dime edited by Dick Lupoff and Don Thompson. Ace Books.
2. Procure a class set of comic books. A variety of subject matter is best. Play down the "Archie" types--adventure comics work best.
3. Get supplies: colored pencils, pencils, crayons, rulers, 12x18 drawing paper.

ACTIVITIES

First day--Read a comic book episode during the first half of the period. Then discuss stereotypes of plot and character as they relate to the genre.

Second day--Discuss the remaining basic elements; present information concerning objectives 3 and 4 above.

Third day--Present historical perspective. Hand out planning sheet one. Planning sheet one contains the following information, which students must discuss among themselves in order to begin: name of the original comic book, physical and behavioral characteristics of both the protagonist and antagonist; setting; brief description of the proposed plot; identify the theme; name the specific episode in the comic; spaces to draw pictures of the main characters. (My students do these in groups of two. Individuals can finish if they hustle, but larger groups seem to work against themselves.)

Fourth day--Finish planning sheet one. Finish planning sheet two, which contains 21 blanks. Each represents one of the frames in the comic. Students should write what will happen in each frame.

Fifth day--Hand out two sheets of drawing paper for each comic. This will be folded and numbered to make an eight-page comic book. Two pages should be completed at the end of the day.

Sixth day--Two more pages completed.

Seventh day--ditto

Eighth day--the same

Ninth day--coloring and catch-up. Comics due at the end of the day.

Tenth day--Test. Afterward, allow students to share each other's work.

COMIC PLAN

Page one--Front cover. Should contain Comics Code Authority approval, full illustration with dialogue, title, and episode title.

Page two--full-page advertisement

Page three--three frames, the first of which is the title frame for the episode and serves to start the story.

Page four--six frames

Page five--letters to the editor. These should be printed in two columns and fill the page. There should also be a special title for the letters which corresponds to the subject matter or the hero of the comic. For example, in the comic I wrote, my hero Chronox used time to capture villains. The letterhead was "Timely Pieces." (Yes, it's corny.)

Page six--six frames

Page seven--six frames, with a conclusion to the episode

Page eight--back cover. Full page advertisement

HINT: do one yourself, regardless of what the result looks like. If the students know you have followed the procedure, they will be more willing to work. Many will be motivated to do a better job than you, so don't make it appear too professional.

POETRY

Marette Jackson, Conway ARK

When introducing poetry to a freshman English class I start with the poem, "Garden of Love" by William Blake.

The Garden of Love

I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen;
A chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this chapel were shut,
And "Thou shalt not" writ over the door;
So I turned to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore:

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tombstones where flowers should be;
And priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars my joys and desires.

I write the poem on the board and invite students to sketch an illustration of it in their journals. After a few seconds one will invariably stop, look up, and say, "But there are two scenes." I agree and suggest that they put in both scenes.

After they finish, I sketch (I hesitate to use a stronger word to refer to my stick people) the scenes on the board as the students tell me what to put in. Then the students study the scenes and comment on the changes in the garden and on the significance of those changes. Instead of floundering around guessing at "hidden meanings," they center their discussion on what the poem actually does.

Throughout the semester I notice students reading poems, frowning, and then getting out their sketch pads. And I always have a lively class discussion about visual images.

A university should be a place of light, of liberty, and of learning.
—Benjamin Disraeli

VEGETA(B)LES

Ann Smith, Northfield, VT

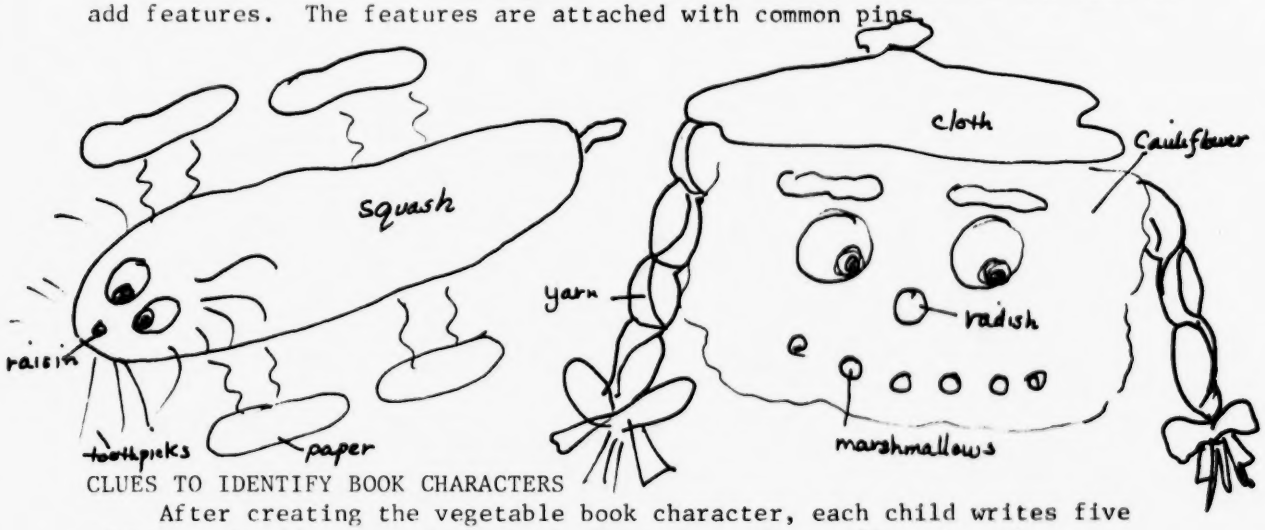
In the fall, about the time of our first hard frost, I ask the children to bring in an unusual vegetable from their garden. If they do not have a garden, they can usually either find a potato, carrot, or onion at home or use an extra vegetable brought in by a friend.

VEGETABLE BIOGRAPHIES

The day all the vegetables arrive, our writing lesson centers on our harvest. Each child spends time carefully looking at his or her vegetable. What does it look like? Color? Texture? Shape? Size? Where did it come from? How did it get there? What use does it have? After answering these questions, each child writes a biography of the vegetable. The personality that is developed for each vegetable is limited only by the child's imagination.

VEGETABLE BOOK CHARACTERS

Next each child selects a character from a book he or she is reading and creates this character out of the vegetable. Scraps such as yarn, cloth, beads, marshmallows, paper, styrofoam, toothpicks, etc., are used to add features. The features are attached with common pins.



CLUES TO IDENTIFY BOOK CHARACTERS

After creating the vegetable book character, each child writes five clues to the identity of the book character. We usually try to be as "tricky" as possible.

To improve speaking skills and to expose the class to new books, we now present each character to the class. Each student shows his or her vegetable book character to the group and reads a clue until someone guesses the character. If the student feels the book character will be very obvious from the vegetable creation, he may read the clues before showing the vegetable book character.

CARTOONING

Connie Vilott, Independence, MO

This political cartooning lesson has been created around the philosophy that writing, as a tool for learning, can enhance the understanding of content in any discipline. Combining this practice with a current events or history unit will stimulate students to seek information independently, analyze content to

differentiate between fact and opinion, and apply acquired knowledge to appropriate situations. Lessons like this stimulate creative thinking.

MATERIALS--

Political cartoons (A good source is A Cartoon History of the United States Foreign Policy by the Editors of the Foreign Policy Association, Wm. Morrow and Company)

Newspaper articles about US and foreign events, policies, issues

PROCEDURE

Prewriting

Show the class some political cartoons, some from the past as well as current cartoons. Discuss the event or issue which might have led to the creation of this satirical method of relaying a message to the audience.

Guide students in analyzing significant events of the period surrounding the cartoon.

Discuss how the creator of the cartoon must have felt about the subject of the cartoon.

Stimulate fluency by discussing whether a cartoonist could have taken an opposite point of view. Elicit ideas about how a cartoon reflecting an opposite position might have developed.

Discuss the style of writing (satire) used by the cartoonist to express an idea or feeling

Use of humor and wit to make something real appear ridiculous

Use of sarcasm

Caricaturing of a country or an individual

Summarize the prewriting activity by reading and discussing current articles about US and foreign issues, policies, and events, and brainstorming ideas for political cartoons.

Composing

As a result of discussions from the articles and the opinions formulated, students can create their own political cartoons.

Editing

Break the class into groups of four or five students and have them exchange cartoons. Let students express, orally or in writing, the meaning of the cartoons as they perceive them. Compare student's expressions with the intended meaning and use these results as a basis for revision.

Extended composing

Use the political cartoon exercise to write an editorial about the issue being satirized. The editorial should include a thesis statement expressing the writer's position and paragraphs which develop support for the statement.

swift

Fr. John Itzaina, Richmond, CA

Subject matter: An introduction to Swift and "A meditation upon a Broom-stick"

Objectives; To introduce the life and works of Swift

To review metaphysical conceit, parody, parallelism

Method; Have students either read it quietly or together

Have students list Swift's views of human nature

Point out and list Swift's use of the metaphysical conceit

Ask what kind of man would write such a thing as "A Meditation..."?
Describe Swift's life

"A MEDITATION UPON A BROOM-STICK according to the Style and manner of the Honourable Robert Boyle's Meditations. Written in the Year 1703"

This single stick, which you now behold ingloriously lying in that neglected corner, I once knew in a flourishing state in the forest, it was full of sap, full of leaves, and full boughs; but now, in vain does the busie art of man pretend to vye with nature, by tying that wither'd bundle of twigs to its sapless trunk, it is now at best but the reverse of what it was, a tree turn'd upside down, the branches on the earth, and the root in the air; it is now handled by every dirty' wrench, condemn'd to do her drudgery, and by a capricious kind of fate, destin'd to make others clean, and be nasty itself: at length worn to the stumps in the service of the maids. It is either thrown out of doors, or condemn'd to its last use of kindling a fire.

When I beheld this, I sigh'd, and said to myself, "Surely mortal man is a broomstick"; nature sent him into the world strong and lusty in a thriving condition, wearing his own hair on his head, the proper branches of this reasoning vegetable, till the axe of intemperance has lopt off his green boughs. and left him a wither'd trunk. He then flies to art, and puts on a perriwig, valuing himself upon an unnatural bundle of hairs, all covered with powder that never grew on his head; but now should this our "Broom-stick" pretend to enter the scene, proud of those birchen spoils it never bore, and all covered with dust, though the sweepings of the finest lady's chamber, we should be apt to ridicule and despise its vanity, partial judges that we are! of our own excellencies, and other men's defaults.

But the "Broom-stick" perhaps you'll say, is an emblem of a tree standing on its head; and pray what is man, but a topsy-turvy creature, his animal faculties perpetually mounted on this rational; his head where his heels should be; groveling on the earth, and yet with all his faults, he sets up to be an universal reformer and corrector of abuses, a remover of grievances, rakes into every slut's corner of nature, bringing hidden corruptions to the light, and raises a mighty dust where there was none before, sharing deeply all the while, in the very same pollutions he pretends to sweep away: his last days are spent in slavery to women, and generally the least deserving: 'till worn to the stumps, like his brother Bezom, he's either kicked out of doors, or made use of to kindle, for others to warm themselves by.

Swift's views of human nature: "reasoning vegetable," "axe of intemperance," "vain," "topsy-turvy creature," "hypocritical," "corrupted," "a slave to women," "impotent."

Swift's use of the metaphysical conceit (long, extravagant comparison or metaphor joining two highly dissimilar things):

man - broomstick robust - green
old age - cut off from the tree flight to art - used to clean
reformer - cleans but dirties itself
slave to women - used by cleaning maids
forgotten - used and discarded in the fire

What type of man would write something like this?

The occasion for the Meditation: Swift was Lord Templeton's secretary. Lady Temple (Dorothy Osborne), a pedantic lady, used to recite Robert Boyle's "Occasional Reflections upon Several Subjects," 1664. "Meditation is a parody on Boyle.

Swift, not yet a broken man, 36 years old, already had written under the nom de plume of Isaac Bickerstaff against John Partridge, an astrologer and almanac maker, enemy of Swift's church.

Swift was alienated always: a displaced person who ended up mad, a "drival in a show." Exiled to Ireland, be became the champion of the Irish, dean of St. Patrick's cathedral in Dublin.

Swift's "Meditation" can also be used as an example of effective writing, especially for parallelism. It can also be used for declamation or recitation in public speaking.

VOCABULARY

Dianne Robinson, Fairfield, Ohio

At Fairfield High School we offer several vocabulary courses, based on the ability of the student. Aside from the usual assignment of workbook exercises, original sentences and paragraphs, I use several other assignments which have proven enjoyable both to the students and myself.

One is a small group assignment to rewrite a children's story such as "Cinderella," "Snow White," "The Three Bears," etc. utilizing at least a specified number of words from the vocabulary text or particular lesson. Usually I require the use of twenty-five words from the list if the assignment is to be completed in less than two class periods. I usually use no more than three people to a group; otherwise the work load will fall on one student, and the noise level climbs!

Another assignment I tried last year around Christmas time was to have each class member create a Christmas/Holiday card. Students could use original artwork, tracings, cut and paste, or any other medium. The inside of the card had to contain at least five vocabulary list words. This worked well in Vocab. II where students have a section early in the quarter on words relating to "Joy."

I was extremely pleased with the originality and creativity which the students revealed.

Students used pastels, water colors, pen and ink, crayon, and felt markers. I was impressed with the variety of expression and materials used--construction paper, yarn, rubbings, etc. The class seemed impressed with the work turned in by their classmates. I even had requests for extra time--some people had hurriedly done the assignment and when they saw the quality work turned in by the others, they wanted to do the assignment over. The work, when posted on the bulletin board, brought in many positive comments from students in my other classes.

An example of the verse writing, done by Tung Thanh (David) Vu, a senior at FHS said," May you have a blithe Christmas and a buoyant New Year, may your kith and kin always be salubrious and frolicsome."

Coffeehouses

Renée Campbell, Bangor, ME

Each year when I teach the 18th century in British literature, I set aside one day for my students to set up what we call our "coffeehouses." Each group of students (consisting of 4 to 5 in a group) arranges desks as tables in the various corners of the room. They bring in "munchies and liquid refreshment" to help create a relaxed social atmosphere. This helps create a casual mood for informal conversation or discussion. Once divided into these groups (along with their goodies) the students understand that their forty-five minutes of socializing must be based on a discussion on one of five topics, assigned prior to class, on which they as a group have decided. Topic choices are as follows:

1. You are present at the time of the Great Plague of 1665 in London. You are talking with Daniel Defoe, and you are describing the people and the situations as you see them.
2. Among you are Addison and Steele. They are listening to your conversation (gossip) in hope of finding a story for their Spectator. Provide them with information which would be appropriate.
3. You all know of a couple, a man and a woman, who are feuding over some trivial matter. To make them see their silliness, you (as a group) have made up a satire (along the lines of Pope's "Rape of the Lock") to make them see how ridiculous their actions are. What is your story or satire?
4. Decide on a particular present situation which all of you feel is troublesome. By use of satire, think up a solution to it.
5. You are having dinner with your friend James Boswell at the home of Samuel Johnson who is a mutual friend. Describe your evening and conversation with the esteemed Johnson , as well as any peculiarities which might have occurred during the evening.

The students (each group) have the entire forty-five minutes to discuss one of the five topics. The following day, the class time is used for each of the groups to report to the others their conversations, experiences, discoveries, etc. I have found this repeatedly to be a very informative lesson for my students and one which they have a lot of fun doing.

Be a Boswell

Judy Elges, Carson City, NEV

Write a five-entry journal (each entry consisting of 200 words) on the life of someone you choose to observe over a two-week period. Such a time span allows for days when not much is happening or you do not see your biographee. You can expect complete confidentiality though the teacher does not expect anything embarrassing or intimate on the subject.

The final work will be evaluated on such points as abundance and precision of detail, liveliness, vividness of presentation, keenness and freshness of observation, and ease of style. Your basic aim is to bring your subject to life through your subject's thoughts and actions.

Careful observation is the way. Your person does not need to be the colorful personality who attracts attention easily. Sometimes quiet, disciplined people reveal deep and brilliant hues to a patient observer. Try not to make the person you are observing too aware of your observation though he or she may know you are doing so. Make mental observations; make notes later.

Tips:

1. Use all the senses. (How does the subject sound when he talks, laughs, eats? What do his fingernails look like? His wardrobe? What are his personal habits?)
2. Note mannerisms. (How does the subject stand when talking? Does he have speech mannerisms like "you know," "far out"? What gestures does he use? How does he sit? How does he look at people?)
3. Quote profusely. (Include chunks of dialogue that are typical or revealing of the subject's attitudes, opinions, speech patterns.)
4. Show your subject in as large a variety of moods and situations as possible. (What does the subject say and how does he look at lunch? What is his reaction to anger--his own and others? When is he at his best and how does he behave then? Is he different in one social situation than in another?)
5. How do people close to your subject characterize him? (a parent, best friend, classmate, son or daughter, etc.)

Out of this information, select details and dates from your rough notes. Re-write into your most readable style. Average 200 words per entry. Don't be cute or clever, interjecting yourself into the writing. Your subject is the subject. Keep your style natural, one that stresses your thinking and feelings about the subject.

scifi

Philip Buley, Middlebury, VT

In dealing with science fiction, particularly with the short story unit, it is fun to have students analyze how scifi writers find ideas. Usually their list is similar to "changing a law of science, the environment, time, how humans behave, and using an unfamiliar setting or forming a new social law."

Students are given an example, and then asked to pick one of the idea areas and change the "normal" to their "new." They are then asked to list the considerations they should have for their new idea.

These are fun to discuss with the class and can become the basis for a written exercise, either creative or expository.

An example or two to help them start:

1. What if everything weighed 100 pounds?
   Consider--putting on earrings, juggling, wearing contact lenses
   Weird possibility--as soon as two objects are combined (i.e. woman and earrings) the total weight is still 100 pounds!
2. What if objects (including people) could move across (laterally) or down but never up?
   Consider--eating, producing food, travel
   Weird idea--Don't ever bend over to tie your shoe!

The Heroic

Sister Mary Rose Crowley, New Britain, CT

This unit on heroes/heroines and the concept of the heroic is used in senior English and humanities classes.

Give this task to the students:

You are junior executives in the Tomaquin Game Company, a subsidiary of Learning Products of Connecticut. The goals of Tomaquin are twofold: to better human life in the 80s and to make a reasonable profit. Design a game about heroes/heroines.

Decide what age group you want as your market. You might do different versions for different markets.

Make a list of all the possible ideas you might use. (You may convert a game you already know. The more original the idea, however, the better the game you'll have.

Remember that you must be able to play the game in a classroom.

Decide on an idea and then assemble the necessary materials. (e.g. paper, a board, dice, markers, cards, etc.)

Do whatever research is necessary to verify information used in the game.

Determine the object of the game. Be clear about how one succeeds in playing the game.

Write the rules for the game. Number of players, turns, scoring, etc.

Conduct a test run of the game before it is marketed. Have groups in your class play it.

Meet the production deadline of one week from the day you receive the task.

Divide students into groups of three or four to work on this project. Allow two or three class periods plus homework time to complete the game and one class period to have other students play the game. We have found that the games also get tested in the cafeteria, the resource centers, and outside the school.

Allow class time for students to reflect and to evaluate what they have done. We encourage a discussion of the cooperative/ competitive elements of student games, especially in the humanities class.

Give a presentation on the concept of the heroic after the games have been designed, played, evaluated, and handed in. Include:

1. Their understanding of heroes/heroines
   (In doing their game, the students usually discover the key similarities and differences in their understanding of the heroic. This large group presentation is a summary of their findings.)
2. Traditional and evolving concepts of heroes/ heroines in all areas of life.
3. Traditional and evolving concepts of heroes/heroines in literature. (Examples taken from literature they have studied during high school.)

Assign the study of a novel, play, or short story for the expressed purpose of examining the concept of hero/heroine used by the author.

Note:

When this unit is used in the humanities, we study the hero/heroine in literature, art, music, film, religion, history, psychology. We ask for assistance from our colleagues in other departments.

We also consider the use of persuasive language in the promotional literature the students use with their games. Later we consider the use of critical language as the students write about the literature and/or the humanities studied.

review a film

Micki Remos, Mesa, AZ

This film review format was designed to help students become discriminating viewers. Answers can be turned in for grades if they are considered writing assignments. They can also serve as a basis for class discussion if everyone has seem the same film.

FILM REVIEW FORMAT

The following items will help indicate how well you saw your film. Use most or all of the items if they suit your purpose. Try to use at least some.

Add comments and questions for future use by you and your classmates when you feel your contribution would help us all understand a film better.

The first part of a section is a "Film Fact" which you can trust to be true.

The second part is labelled "Observations." Here you will locate a few questions related to the "Film Fact."

These questions are designed to help you develop an approach to commenting on films. You may wish to devise similar questions to add to the format. You might even want to research the art of film making and come up with a few "Film Fact" contributions of your own. That's great!

1. Film Fact: Music is usually suited to the action of a scene in a film. Exciting action usually has exciting music. Sad scenes usually have sad music; funny scenes have comical (light, sprightly) music.
   Observation: In your film where does the music reflect the mood of the action? Select only a few examples. What kind of instruments or voices are heard: drums, guitar, violins, a whistle, chorus? What kind of music do you hear: rock and roll, classical, bluegrass, jazz?
2. Film Fact: Colors stimulate us. Color glamorizes the costumes of actors and actresses. It "paints" the countryside: forests, deserts, mountains, oceans, as well as interiors of homes and buildings. It can be intense color, or soft and pastel-like, or dull and dark.
   Observations: What sort of colors are used in your film: bright, gaudy colors that are happy or dull, dreary colors that are sad? One type accompanies scenes that are pleasant, the other scenes that are tragic or morose. Or is there something inbetween, soft colors that might accompany some delicate shots of nature, sunsets, dawns, mountain tops?
3. Film Fact: Composition of a scene is important to a cameraman because each time he looks through the lens he sees a picture, and it has to be properly composed. Everything in the shot should be in its proper place and create a pleasing balance and perspective. On the other hand, not every shot must be a beautiful picture. In some scenes, composition is arranged in such a way that each shot renders a picture that is harsh or ugly--and for a purpose.
   Observation: How do one or two scenes in your film display either a beautiful picture or an extremely ugly or even frightening one?
4. Film fact: Lighting in a film often creates a mood. Lighting can create a scary and ghostlike atmosphere that can cause an audience to feel frightened. Also, a sad or even a happy mood can be influenced in a film by proper lighting. Lighting can also hint at what is about to happen (especially with the weather).
   Observations: At what point did the lighting in your film 1) create a mood; or 2) support the mood established by the location or the acting; or 3) hint at what was about to happen?
5. Film fact: There are a few standard beliefs that are accepted by many film makers concerning the distance of a camera from a subject that is being filmed:

a) If the camera films a scene from a great distance, it is establishing the setting for the audience (letting the audience view enough of the surrounding area to enable them to know where this scene is taking place. It can happen several times during a film.)

b) If the camera films at a medium distance, it is providing a closer look at some part of the setting, at a group of people in a crowd, for example, or a large object within a broad area.

c) If the camera films at a very close range, it is offering the audience an intimate association with a person or an object. The audience sees only a face, or hands, or a small object. Item "c" is very important.

Observations: On what occasions were these interesting samples of each of the above? How did any closeups (c) of persons affect you? Were you drawn closer to their "thinking process" by being so close? Were their lines more interesting now than at other times (more distant shots)?

Black and White

Mary Knecht Williams, Moorestown, NJ

Background: A creative group experience from a summer workshop provided the raw materials for a new approach to short story analysis. The original exercise involved the individual production of 18x24 black on white collages which the group then collectively arranged into a single mural.

More interested in the vitality of the individual works than the totality of the 'mural,' I began to view each collage as a potential metaphor for the short story. After all, on the most fundamental level, a short story requires a similarly finite amount of white paper and black ink which an author may then combine in any number of interesting ways.

Adapting this activity to the classroom proved easy, educational,gratifying!

Materials: White and black paper, one sheet of each per student. Glue, tape, and scissors. Soft musical accompaniment such as Rampal's "Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano."

Abrams, M.H. A Glossary of Literary Terms; Crane, Milton, ed., Fifty Great American Short Stories; Guerin, W.L. et al, A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature.

Overview: On the first day of the term, texts and course outlines were distributed, and homework was assigned in the glossary for day 3.

Day 2 began with the distribution of the art materials and the instructions to create something interesting with the black paper on the white. In answer to a question about the purpose of the activity, a statement that the full explanation would be provided the next day sufficed. The results were a fascinating collection of representational and non-representational art in two and three dimensions. Displayed on the bulletin board, these black and white studies became viable tools of literary analysis, providing illustrative examples and analogies throughout the trimester.

On day 3 the 'metaphor' was explored via the discussion of the literary terms assignment, and students readily applied the terms to appropriate elements of the collages.

Followup assignments included lighthearted, yet fruitful, analyses of the black and white studies for examples of archetypes, Freudian and Jungian symbols, and elements of style. Near the end of the class, students wrote unique and insightful essays in which a single black and white study was interpreted as a metaphor for one of the stories studied.

mail call

Polly Duncan, Greenville, NC

A study of friendly and business letters

Objectives: To give students experience in writing friendly and business letters, to teach correct letter forms, to read and critique letters written by others.

Method: Decorate a large cardboard box to resemble a US mail drop box

The teacher will introduce the correct letter form, posting models near the mailbox.

The student is assigned a letter to write.

The student folds his completed assignment.

Correct addressing of an envelope may be taught and procedure followed.

The letter is dropped into the mailbox.

On certain days the teacher appoints a postman who removes letters and delivers a letter to each student who has written one.

The receiver of the letter reads it, evaluates the content, and notices any mistakes in mechanics.

The reader may make comments to the writer.

Interesting letters may be shared with the class.

Time: This may be a weekly assignment or may be done as often as the teacher desires. Letters may be assigned as homework and the reading of the letters may also be done out of class. Only the instruction by the teacher, the delivering of the letters, and the sharing of the contents need take place in class.

Followup: Letters of each writer should be placed in a folder. Occasionally the teacher should go through the folder with each student to help determine progress and to point out repeated mistakes in style or mechanics.

Suggested topics:

WRITE A LETTER...

to your teacher suggesting that students be allowed to celebrate one Labor Day each month

from an Indian, offering to buy Manhattan Island to convert it into a reservation

to a friend describing all the things you saw as you took a 5-mile bike ride

to a friend telling what happened to you during the 5-mile bike ride

to a friend in the East telling him about striking it rich in the California gold rush

to Christopher Columbus asking permission to sail with him to India

to the Walt Disney studios describing a new cartoon character you have drawn and wish them to buy

to a real witch inviting her to your Halloween party

from Bigfoot ordering a new pair of shoes

to a publishing company from the statue <u>The Thinker</u> who wants to publish a book of his thoughts

to Smokey the Bear congratulating him for his good forestry work

inviting the Indians on the next mountain to your next Thanksgiving dinner

to Jack Frost complaining of the trouble his last visit caused

from a shepherd boy telling his friend of his experience in a pasture one night in Bethlehem

to Santa Claus asking him to visit an old person who needs many things

from the Old Year bragging about how he handled problems during his term in office

to a prophet telling him what you think will happen during the next year

to a space hero asking him to take you along on his next mission

describing the view from a balloon ride

to Ben Franklin telling him how one of his wise sayings helped you

to Cinderella's ugly stepmother applying for Cinderella's old job
from the tiger in one cage to the tigers in another cage
from a fish requesting the mayor to clean up the lake water
to a former US President commenting on some action which took place during his term
to a scientist asking for help on a problem you are having with your new invention
from an English knight traveling to Jerusalem on a Crusade
from a leprechaun in America telling his Irish cousin about the unlucky things Americans do
to a museum curator asking for an identification of a bone you found
to the manager of a department store asking for a summer job
to the author of a book telling him/her how the book could have ended differently
from your pet asking for better treatment
to Peter Pan requesting permission to live in Never-Never Land
to Mr. Webster telling him of a new word you have made up to go in the dictionary
from an artist describing a picture he has just painted
to your teacher describing a perfect summer vacation

WORD CARDS

Marian Price, Orlando, FL

Adding to one's vocabulary is a natural and ongoing activity for humans. Normally we master a new word gradually upon encountering it repeatedly as we read, watch TV, listen to lectures, etc. This process can be speeded up by making each new word the object of deliberate attention. I ask students to make a word card for each new word they encounter during the term. (Five cards per week is a reasonable minimum.) While I use this assignment in a college class devoted entirely to vocabulary study, it can readily be included in any level English class.

Sample word cards with instructions are provided. Each card should include: the new word in its basic uninflected form; a brief definition in everyday language; the name of the person who used the word, with an explanation if needed; the newspaper, magazine, or book where the word was used; the context--one or more sentences quoted exactly with the word in caps or underlined; an original sentence using the word; optional: phonetic spelling and derivation.

Most college students are able to emulate the models with little difficulty, although occasionally I return a card with instructions to write a definition better suited to the quoted context or with advice on how to write a better sentence using the new word. Once approved, cards can be studied and reviewed until the words are mastered. Students can test themselves by writing the words alone on the backs of the cards and using them as flash cards.

I advise students to look for new words in magazines which have a challenging vocabulary, such as New Yorker, Harper's, Psychology Today, Newsweek, Time, Atlantic Monthly, Saturday Review, Scientific American, etc. Other good sources are newspapers, texts, novels, and recreational reading.

Students report that the word card assignment makes them more alert to new words and more habitual and efficient in dictionary use--two goals of any vocabulary-building program.

PRS HOMES

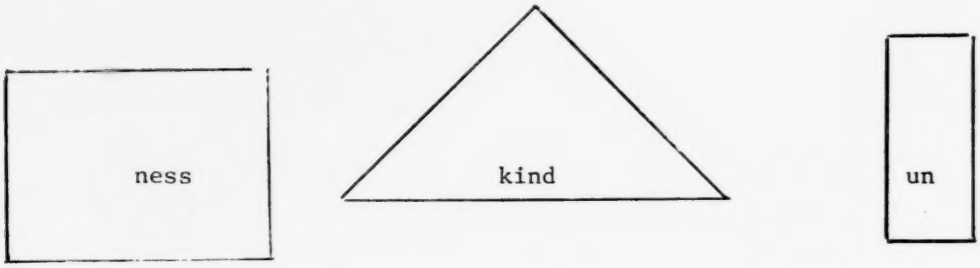
Sr. Louise Auclair, Manchester, NH

This is a manipulative activity that can be used to replace the traditional worksheets. In addition to stressing word parts or morphemes, it can also be used to review other skills. Examples are included below.

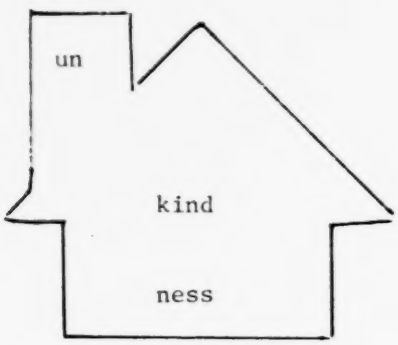
Construction procedures:

1. Cut a number of squares of oak tag. (The size will depend on the age level you teach.) Write a suffix on each.
2. Cut an equal number of triangles and write a root word on each.
3. Finally, prepare small rectangles with a prefix on each.

Example:



The students are to try and construct as many houses as possible using one of each piece.



Prepare an answer key of possible answers

Sample words (intermediate grades)

en tangle ment	un kind ness
re fill able	dis courage ment
un time ly	un self ish
un sight ly	dis card ed
pre record ed	en camp ment

Other activities that can follow:

Write the definition of each word

Write the word and use it in a sentence

Place each word in alphabetical order

TEEN TOWN

Jean Dahling, Fergus Falls, MINN

This ninth grade unit is designed for a three or four week period which can be expanded to make the plan for the city more complete. We have an elective system, and this is the description included on the choice sheet when students indicate the next classes they would like to take:

> TEEN TOWN You are part of a group of 9th graders chosen to plan and set up an independent community for yourselves. In the process of electing a mayor and representatives, starting a newspaper, businesses, a system of justice, planning the location and layout of buildings, etc., you will review the skills of running business meetings, holding group discussions, and being able to express yourself effectively in writing.

This is the schedule we followed last year, but it will vary from one year to the next and one group to another.

Day 1--I introduce the unit, tell them what the class is about and what their responsibilities are. For the rest of the period I tell them about some authors' attempts to describe the perfect society, ShangriLa in Lost Horizon, Walden Two, etc. Mostly I share the book that gave me the idea for the class in the first place, The Children's Republic by Eberhard Mobius (Avon, 1973). It describes "the amazing true story of an independent state (in Spain) in which young people under twenty govern themselves."

Day 2--Students divide themselves into groups of four or five to consider and make suggestions for the following:

1. Location of the city (can be very specific or quite general)
2. Age of the people to live there
3. Size of the city
4. Name of the city

One section last year chose an island named Mountain View near Hawaii, eight square miles, population of 1500, ages 12-20. The other section had no age limit in their town in Oregon called New Beginning. Their population of 275-399 had plenty of room on their 25 square miles. When they present their plan, they may also campaign for their choices, so if there is real interest, they may go into the next day. At the bottom of the written ballot students are asked to vote also for the topics they'd like to work on next:

1. business and industry
2. residential areas
3. park and recreation
4. law and justice
5. education
6. schools and churches
7. communication (radio, TV, newspapers)
8. social agencies
9. transportation
10. city plan (map, zoning, etc.)

Day 3--Announce results of the first vote. Give notes on parliamentary procedure: electing officers, making a motion, order of business, terms to know, general rules of discussion, voting, etc. Begin to practice these skills.

Day 4--Have a film on city government. Each student writes a reaction paper after a period of discussion.

Day 5--Parliamentary practice continues, particularly electing officers, making and discussing motions, amendments, stopping debate

Day 6--The former mayor of the city visits class and discusses the way the city is run and answers questions. Individual reaction papers are assigned.

Day 7--Begin working on next group reports--education, housing, business, and industry. These reports will contain much more detail and each group will turn in their first copy with all corrections and improvements as well as a final copy in ink. Everyone in the group receives the same grade unless some have obviously been goofing off.

Day 8--With the teacher acting as temporary chairman, nominations are made for mayor and city council members. There may be campaign speeches. Continue the group work.

Day 9--The mayor and council are elected by secret ballot. These elected students will conduct the meetings whenever discussions or decisions are made. Groups complete their reports.

Day 10--During this business meeting each group presents its proposals for the topics of the report. When all have been presented, motions for adoption of part or all of a report are made. After an often lively debate and amendments, these parts of the city plan are adopted.

Day 11--Each student should come prepared to make a motion, then give a one-minute speech supporting the motion.

Day 12-Day 15--All groups work on the next topics: transportation, recreation and map of the city. Reports are completed and there is debate and adoption of the new topics.

Day 16--Individual test on parliamentary procedure.

The flexibility comes from the number of reports that can be made and the other activities that can be worked in. One year, about the middle of the unit, I announced at the beginning of a class period that the town had been given a $5000 grant, and that they would have to decide how to spend it by the end of the period. Things really moved that hour.

This has become one of my favorite units because I think it is a way to teach some important basic language skills in a way that ninth grade students seem to find interesting.

SS WRITING

Irina Markova, Montpelier, VT

If students are stuck on WHAT to write, here are some suggestions to get them started:

I. SETTING	II. CHARACTERS	III. MOOD	
a deserted beach house	an escaped criminal	sadness	horror
a prison cell	two strangers	humor	fantasy
a street corner	a blind child	boredom	sorrow
a sports event	an aging rock star	fear	romance
a beauty pageant	a hysterical old man	comedy	
a stalled elevator between floors	a circus performer		
	a foreigner	a farmer	two soldiers
	two soldiers	a baby	twins a hunter

IV. CONFLICT-CAUSING SITUATIONS

a feud or estrangement between family members of friends
a rivalry
a romance
a return after a long absence

physical or mental illness
being lost, helpless, and/or alone
personal or professional boredom
disagreement with government policy or social custom
opposing values
a twist of fate
personal defeat
a misunderstanding
a fire, blizzard, etc.

V. CLIMACTIC MOMENTS
person admits to himself he's been living a lie
person realizes she's been betrayed
a long-kept secret is suddenly revealed
a person makes a momentous decision
a murder, theft, fire, battle or natural disaster takes place
a good deed is initiated or prevented
a person runs away, disappears, or dies
a damaging letter is found
a person realizes she's ruined others' lives
actions have the opposite effect of what the doer intended

ADVENTURE
A flood has turned your home town into a raging river
You're a stranger in a large city. You're walking around at night and then...
The protagonist wakes up in a small, dark, locked room. How did she get there? How does she escape or does she?
An older sister is sent out to look for her brother who has not returned from a party. What's happening to him?
Two astronauts on their way to the moon get into a fight.

HORROR
The walls of a room suddenly start closing in on you, turn into waves of water, turn hairy and furry and alive.
The lights go off and she knows she's not alone.
He wakes from a deep sleep and feels something brushing against his arm.

MYSTERY
He's being blackmailed. What's his secret? Who's blackmailing him?
Skeleton story or detective story--crime has been committed, detective is hired, suspects are found and questioned, detective follows main suspect, detective gets in trouble and then escapes, suspect is caught and mystery solved.

ROMANCE
He's three hours late for a date. He finally shows up and then...
They've been married for a while and then things begin to change.
Fred loves Sue, but Sue loves Jim who loves Fran who loves Fred.
Two lovers are separated and then are reunited 25 years later.
A couple's love for each other is tested when disaster hits.

FIRST LINERS
Andy sat by the silent phone for hours.
The lights flicked on and off and then everything blackened.

PARAGRAPHING

Ann L. Jensen, Garland, TX

"These students will never write a paragraph." Several years ago, this statement was made by a teacher of low academic eighth graders. The subject area consultant, challenged by the teacher's comment, prepared a lesson for the students. At the end of the lesson, the students--as a class--had written a paragraph and were enthusiastic about writing another by themselves. The technique used is described here.

Step 1

Students are requested to answer a series of questions asked by the teacher. Each answer to a question is to be given in a complete sentence. The first question is "How many high school football players think they will play professional football some day?"

Probably the first responses will be single words or phrases--"lots, a bunch, most of them, a few." The instructions are repeated, "Answer in a complete sentence." Several answers are verbally expressed by students coached into using complete sentences. Students agree upon one of the sentences as the class response. This is then written on the board or on a transparency.

The second question is then asked: "Do you think that this number will actually play?" Again responses are solicited. If fragments are given, other students may give reminders about complete sentences. As before, the class selects a suitable response to be recorded.

The procedure is followed for seven other questions. The recorded result will be nine sentence responses, the basis of a paragraph.

Step 2

The sentences recorded are read as a unit (a rough paragraph). Class criticism and editing follow to "make it sound right" (in the students' perspective) and to "provide appropriate transitional devices and effective details (in the teacher's perspective). The editing comments are done on the board or transparency for all students to see.

Step 3

A final draft of the paragraph is written, based upon the editing comments. This final paragraph may be written by the class as a group or by individual students.

Step 4

A second series of questions provides the opportunity for the students to follow the same procedure and write individual paragraphs.

Questions for Step 1

1. How many high school football players think they will play pro football one day?
2. Do you think that this number will actually play?
3. Are there several reasons why you think this will be so?
4. Are there some football players who are physically inadequate for pro ball?
5. Why? (Are they too small?)
6. Do other potential players decide upon another career choice?
7. Does a college education interfere with some students' plans?
8. Are there any other reasons why a high school player never makes a professional league?
9. Do any high school players ever eventually play pro football?

Questions for Step 4

1. What are the people in the stands doing when the boys on a high school football team run out on the field?
2. What is the coach doing as the national anthem is being played?
3. What noises occur immediately after the playing of the national anthem?
4. How do first-string players go to their field positions before the kickoff?
5. Does the coach look tense? worried? excited?
6. What is the last sound as the game begins?

BINGO

Annie Soo, Oakland, CA

Give students 25 points for each bingo, vertical, horizontal, or diagonal.
Give 250 points if students have a word correctly spelled in each box.
Give students one or two free words.

Here are some words for teachers: baa, maa; Caesar, maestro, Mae; jail, mail, nail, sail; gaol, Mao; claus, cause, maul, laud; eat, beat, meat, idea; feed, feet, meet, see; seize, ceiling; Einstein; Leo, leonine; peon; leukemia, deuce, Teutonic; vial, dial, iambic; sieve, retrieve, believe; Hawaii; biology, iodine; stadium, sodium, gymnasium; boat, goat, coal; shoe, hoe, woe, toe; coil, groin; hour, out; quart, quack, quality; question, quest; quit, quick, quite; quota, quotient..

Directions: Take the letter at the left side first and take down the letter from the top to form two-vowel words. Generally speaking, the first vowel will be pronounced. "When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking."

	a	e	i	o	u
a	aa	ae	ai	ao	au
e	ea	ee	ei	eo	eu
i	ia	ie	ii skiing	io	iu
o	oa	oe	oi	oo	ou
u	ua	ue	ui	uo	uu

research a career

Maggi Stewart, Houston, TX

Here is a grade 11 research project for a low track class which was presented orally in lieu of a term paper.

Outlined below are some dozen activities available to students for their reports. Sections in my classroom notebook contained worksheets, directions, and cross-referencing for individual study. To begin, I had the students set up a portfolio to hold their gains in researching a job/job cluster for themselves. I too set one up.

Students had to meet basic requirements, doing, for example, the interest survey, resume, job application letter, interview; they could enhance the project writing letters to the careers column in the Houston Post, using every available resource in classroom and school library, and questing, using their initiative. Students selected their own evaluating panels and along with their oral report, presented their portfolios showing their acquired skills.

Over a six-week period, these skills included: pre and post testing, vocabulary and special career definitions, culling daily newspaper for both stories and ads pertinent to the report, library investigation, letter writing, listening to directions and to outside guest speakers, making notes and outlining main ideas/details. However, more important, the students learned about decision making and setting priorities.

REQUIREMENTS

I. Introduction--review of jobs/job clusters, using HISD guidance materials for interests, insights, specifications.
II. Set up portfolio--segmented into:
    A. Basic required report information
        1. Tests
        2. Vocabulary
        3. Forms
    B. Worksheets
III. Reading preparation
    A. Houston Post guide for job hunters
    B. IBM job descriptions printouts
    C. Sourcebook assignments
    D. Any other printed resources
IV. Writing preparation
    A. Forms
        1. Interest/aptitude
        2. Out-of-school activities
        3. Resume
        4. Application letter
        5. Interview evaluation
        6. Problem solving
        7. COPS questionnaire
    B. Part time information
    C. Job descriptions
V. Conclusion
    A. Panel presentation
    B. Evaluation following form sheet
    C. Post test

RESOURCES

Greater Houston Area Yellow Pages
Occupational Handbook, US Dept. Labor 197

What Color Is Your Parachute? Bolles, 1974
Working, Terkel, 1975
Career Directions: High School as Tryout, Rosalind Winter, 1975
COPS--California Occupational Preference System, 1976
The Deciding Self, Human Relations Dept. HISD, 1973
The Occupational Finder, Holland, 1972
Planning Your Future, HISD Guidance bulletin
Toward Matching Personal and Job Characteristics, US Dept. Labor, 1975
Sourcebook Magazine for seniors, US Army, 1977
Women's Work
Newspapers: Federal Jobs, Houston Post
Newsletter from Barbara Jordan 1976

Fill the Ark

Rachel Lee, Lake Oswego, OR

PART I Students are divided into small groups and given the following directions:

Imagine that you are Noah and have just been told that a flood is going to destroy the earth. Your assignment is to preserve our language on one 3x5 card. You must choose two words in each of the following categories:
nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, articles, conjunctions, adjectives, prepositions, exclamations
You may also choose two additional words from any category. You will then have a total of twenty words on your card.

Discuss within your group which words in each category you consider to be the most effective, to communicate the broadest scope, or whatever other criteria you consider most important in making your choices. You will be given 10 minutes to reach a decision. When your task is completed, you will be asked to construct sentences which will communicate specific ideas.

PART II

You are now going to construct a paragraph in which you discuss some value in contemporary American society. Write five sentences:

1) one that is a statement of information
2) one that is a statement of philosophy or belief
3) one that is a statement of definition
4) one that is a statement of evaluation
5) one that is a statement of comparison (or that contains a metaphor)

Create your paragraph by putting your sentences together in the following order: #2, #3, #1, #5, and #4.

Some groups will be able to complete the task; others will not. Either way, the exercise provides illustration for an excellent discussion of the necessity for vocabulary in formulating thoughts and in communicating them to other people. The exercise was designed as a followup for a study of 1984, but may also be used in a semantics unit.

Creative Poems

Richard Harmston, Salt Lake City, UT

For some time, I've looked for a creative writing idea that could be shared by high school students as well as elementary school students. This year I found what I have been looking for.

I discovered last year--as a first-year creative writing teacher--that high school students have trouble writing about their lives right now. The experiences of the emerging adult may be rich material for composition, but my students simply don't have enough distance to define and organize their thoughts on the subject. However, if the topic given takes them back a few years, high school students blossom with content.

I started the assignment by asking students to think back to their years spent in elementary school. We discussed those years while writing an investigative journal entry. That is, I asked my students to take a sensory inventory of their elementary school memories. Each student wrote appropriate comments under the categories of touch, taste, sight, hearing, and smell. For instance, one student remembered the peculiar smell of wet rubber boots placed near a heating ventilator.

After we had taken the sensory inventory, I asked each student to provide one memory for a group poem which was written on a large piece of butcher paper covering the front blackboard. In the middle of the butcher paper I had written the title, "When I went to Elementary School."

From the group poem we went into an individual writing assignment. I asked each student to write an elementary school memories poem containing specific sensory images. The content was to be shaped by the following: the first line would be the title and the last line would summarize the somewhat scattered memories used in the poem. The poem was to be written in a conversational style, yet using condensed language.

The individual poems were shared by the class, but the poster poem, which we all helped to write, was sent to Lincoln Elementary School where Bob Howard showed the memories poster to his fifth and sixth grade students. Bob then asked them to contribute a line to a poster poem entitled, "When I get to High School." The students responded with such lines as:

- When I get to high school I am going to smile at the girls, take them to dances and I hope that they like me.
- I will join the drama club and be in their best play.
- I'll probably be the worst football player on the team!
- I'll drink more Coke and eat more food, food, food!
- It will be like in the movies where you don't work. You goof off and just go to the malt shop after school.
- I'll probably fail lunch!
- I'll go to Brighton High School on one condition: that all the boys love me, kiss me, follow me into the cafeteria and walk me home, hug me, take me on dates, and don't try anything like nasty!
- With my luck, I'll have no fun.
- I'll be a cheerleader and everyone will love me.

The elementary school poster was popular reading material for Brighton High students. A teacher who shares the creative writing classroom with me told me that she had to stop class while everyone went over to the poster and read what elementary school students thought about high school. The elementary school memories poster, written by high school students, proved to be just as popular.

Rather than list selected lines from the high school poster, I've included a few sample poems written by individual students. I think you'll find an appealing honesty and humor in their work.

MRS. CRISP TRIED BUT

she never could keep
Veronica quiet one time I
got tired of old Veronica
and told her if she didn't shut
her mouth I'd do it for her
well when I got done, she
didn't talk during class any more I
read a lot and I checked out a dirty book
I knew it was dirty wasn't going to
read it just show it to Mr. Knolls
he told me to get a different book I
said "No" he called my mom she explained
stuff I already knew Mr. Jenkins sat
on my desk after lunch and told
the class 'bout South America how the
sun goes right through your
shirt says you can get a tan in
the shade then he laughed
at himself and how smart he
was one time we tied his shoe
laces to his chair fell on his
face still didn't make him think
he wasn't so smart
fifth grade sure went fast.
--Chrys Smith, 12th grade

KEN BIGLER WAS THE CUTEST BOY

in the whole school
Wes Jensen wore his snow
hat in April that's when he
got his hair cut
once Miss Summers made us
touch cow eyes for our science
project all the girls screamed they
were so gushy just like a sponge
Brian Hoskason always chased
me at recess and tried to
kiss me but I ran fast to the
tricky bars and yelled Kings
I had to stay there all recess
long because he wouldn't leave me
alone Kathy and I got in trouble
for playing on the stage during
recess the principal was really
mad he said we could get hurt and
no one would find us
David Dawson wouldn't love
me because I didn't love him
in fourth grade so I felt sorry
and sent him love letters said I
would always love him I still think
sixth grade was the funnest
grade of all.
--Sue Swanson, 12th grade

MEET A BOOK

Kathy Strawser, Lakewood, OH

An important goal of my course, current literature, is to acquaint students with books--lots of books. One of my most successful ways of accomplishing this is to teach a best-seller unit. In addition to reading a popular book (from a list of 8-10 titles), students are acquainted with many titles through three specific activities: 1) a lecture, "The Parts of a Paperback Cover" 2)a paperback covers survey and 3) a lecture, "How Paperback Covers Sell Books."

One of the first days of the best-seller unit is devoted to the parts of the paperback cover. Students have their chosen paperback in class and are given a chart with the various paperback cover parts listed, such as logo, author, title, illustration, review quotes, descriptive copy, "buy me" blurbs, etc. As each part is defined, the students can check to see if their books have the item. This activity sounds so simple, but I am continually surprised to hear my students claim they didn't know so much information could be found out about their book without reading a page! The activity ends by displaying hardback copies of the students' books, to illustrate the difference between paper and hardback covers.

The students are then given a list of ten new paperback titles to investigate. This list is composed of new titles available at area stores. Students locate five of these titles, describe their covers, and estimate the book's content on the basis of cover alone. The previous paperback cover parts activity makes this an easy and interesting assignment for students and often ends with a personal book purchase by the student. Of course, it has the added advantage of getting my otherwise reluctant reader into the local bookstores.

One of the most popular lectures of the semester is entitled, "How Paperback Covers Sell Books." I load a book cart with over 100 titles from the school's paperback bookstore (or my own library) to illustrate the many "formula covers" used by the paperback publishers--western, Gothic, mystery, historical, and science fiction, as well as some of the more spectacular advertising successes like Future Shock and Helter Skelter. All titles are circulated by category, so the students become acquainted with a large number and variety of books. A fill-in guide accompanies the lecture. My students often make new observations about these covers and other titles they've read or seen.

These three activities have proven to be enjoyable learning experiences for my students. They have taught practical information about the paperback trade, as well as introduced a great variety of titles.

Listen

Donna Johnson, Fountain Valley,CA

The following brief stories are used for checking the listening abilities of primary age children. The children are separated, each with his own paper and crayon. They should be situated so other students papers are not visible. Announce that a short story will be read, and that they will answer some questions about the story by making pictures.

STORY I

The big snowman stood in front of the house. He had a hat and a scarf on his head. Snowman was happy to be there for the winter. The big snowman was made by Toby. Every day on the way to school, Toby would walk by and say,"See you after school." The snowman wished he could wave back.

1. What stood in front of the house?
2. What was the snowman wearing?
3. Who made the snowman?

STORY II

A black furry cat slept on the patio as a tiny butterfly flew by. Suddenly the furry cat woke up and yawned. "I'm hungry," she said, "I will go have a snack." She went to her dish and ate some chocolate cookies, Full, she laid down on a little round rug for another cat nap.

1. What flew by the patio?
2. What did the fluffy cat eat?
3. Where did the cat finally sleep?

STORY III

A. Name on top right of paper.
B. #8 on the top left.
C. O on the bottom left.
D. Flower on the bottom right.
E. #100 in the middle.
F. Circle the #8.
G. Fold the paper in half.

STORY IV

Susan likes pretty flowers. She went to the garden to pick some. In the garden was a big ball. "Where did the ball come from?" she thought. It must belong to Sammy next door. She returned the ball to Sammy. Sammy was so happy to see the ball he gave Susan a big peppermint lollipop.

1. What does Susan like?
2. What did Susan find in the garden?
3. What did Sammy give Susan?

GAME-ING

Merrily P. Hansen, New York City

To play the "Syllable Match-up Game" write syllables from the following list on oaktag cards. Divide the class into two teams. Have the first person on each team come to a line about ten feet from the chalkboard. Display four of the syllable cards. Two should form a real word. The third and fourth cards serve as distractors and cannot be used to form a word. Have the pupils race to arrange the syllable cards so that a word is formed. The first player to correctly do so scores a point for his or her team. Continue playing until all pupils have had at least one turn.

hap	sur	bit	tur	cor	wind
py	prise	ter	key	ner	mill
gar	but	hid	rab	air	scis
bage	ter	den	bit	plane	sors
sum	fun	doc			
mer	ny	tor			

PHILOSOPHY

Carol Huebner, Whittier, CA

This assignment was designed for an honors American literature class to use in a "Dream and Promise" unit. Students were asked to label each of the following people as PUR(itanical), PRAG(matic), or ROM(antic).

1. A sailor in a race sets off on a losing but fast course. When the crew asks why they are not sailing in the direction of the finish line, the sailor replies, "But look at this speed!" (Label what the sailor is NOT.)
2. "The man who has seen the rising moon break out of the clouds at midnight has been present like an archangel at the creation of light and of the world." (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
3. The populace may hiss me, but when I go home and count my money, I applaud myself. (Horace)
4. A mother feels that it is her duty to place home and family ahead of her own desires. For this sacrifice, she believes she will later be rewarded.
5. "If you cannot tell a believable lie, cling then to truth which is always our surest succor in time of need, and manfully accept the consequences." (Dalton Trumbo, "Letter to His Son")
6. Although her husband wants to relax and enjoy each weekend, Sandra feels that it is the only block of time she has for housework and correcting student papers. When she is not doing these tasks, she feels anxious.
7. "What would I most like to do for a living?" He thought for a moment and then stared at me seriously. "Retirement."
8. A school principal justifies his unorthodox curriculum and discipline methods by pointing to the students' high test scores and their positive feelings about the school.
9. A young man is thrilled with his first motorbike and spends hours caring for it before he suddenly has an accident which destroys the bike. "I should have known it was too good to last," he moans.
10. "I was a strong patriot, a peppy, idealistic fellow living in a walkup near Union Square. I had hitchhiked all over America, dragging my suitcase to 43 states.... In fact, I'd turned down a trip to Europe in order to go out and see more (of the U.S.)" (Edward Hoagland, "The Draft Card Gesture," Commentary)

Chaucer plus

Sandra Crawford, Strasburg, OH

A followup to teaching The Canterbury Tales at the 12th grade level.

Instructions:

1. Divide the class into groups of four/five students.
2. Give each group the names of four and/or five other students within the class. (Students must be in this class.)
3. Students must follow Chaucer's rhyme scheme of couplets.
4. Groups must create six to ten lines about each student whose name the group has.
5. Allow each group to also create six to ten lines about a teacher, if they want to--(I haven't found many groups who do NOT want to!)
6. The writing can be humorous, but it CANNOT be nasty and it CANNOT embarrass another student.

7. I read (censor) the poems before they are read aloud. If a particular group wants the poems read aloud, but they are too shy, I will read for them. If a group doesn't want the poems read aloud, I won't read them.
8. Name of our poem? Strasburg Tales

I've done this activity each year for the past ten years. It has been very successful for me. I allow one or two periods for the students to work together. This is usually ample time. Once they begin, they find the couplets fun and not terribly difficult.
We are a small Class A school and the students have been in school together for twelve years, so they know each other quite well by now. They can easily find a humorous situation and/or description about each other. The students have enjoyed this creative writing activity each year. They also remember Canterbury Tales because of it.

NOTE: Several times groups have created some not-so-nice descriptions, but because I constantly circulate from group to group I can catch the culprits before any harm is done. I simply cross out the unacceptable lines and ask the group to rewrite that particular description.

novel logs

Carol Harriman, Sparks, NV

Response logs can be used for any novel or play, in place of or in addition to quizzes. This assignment allows for a more personal dialogue with each student about the novel as the teacher can respond to the responses, answering questions and clearing up confusion.

Directions to the student: For each chapter of the novel, write a response. It need not be longer than five or six sentences. The following questions are guidelines for your response logs. You may choose one or two of the suggestions for each chapter, or you may make up your own response.

Questions:
1. Respond to a certain character. Do you like or dislike him/her?
2. Why do you suppose a certain character has done what he has done? Can you predict the ramifications of any of these actions?
3. Do you see any potential conflicts growing in this chapter?
4. Was there a description that especially appealed to you? Why?
5. Was a particular chapter boring or exciting? Explain briefly.
6. Was there anything in the chapter that confused you? Explain briefly.
7. Was there a new word in the chapter that you needed to look up? Do so and define it.
8. Is there anything you consider symbolic in this chapter?
9. Does anything fit together in the chapter that had been confusing you before?
10. Is there anything that angers you in the chapter? Warms your heart? Makes you sad? Explain briefly.

Sample responses from To Kill a Mockingbird:

"I wonder why Jem felt he had to show Scout the hair on his chest?"
"I hated the people of Maycomb in this chapter."
"I was surprised that Scout knew exactly who Boo was and she didn't seem excited."

NAME GAME

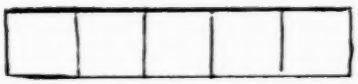
Sue Rauld, Balboa, Panama, and Ann Jarvis, Racine, Wisconsin

Introduce two examples on the chalkboard. Pass out ditto sheets and ask students to fill in the blanks as they would for a crossword puzzle. Students should finish within the class period and correct together as a class activity.

Examples:

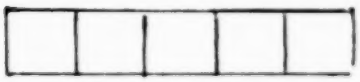
Indian drum

Type of song sung at Christmas



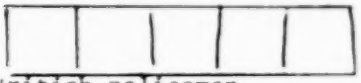
Prayer said just before a meal

Award for best mystery book

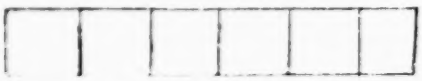


Cloth towels are made of

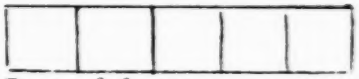
Type of roast beef or steak



Winner

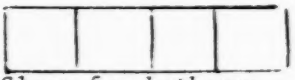


British policeman



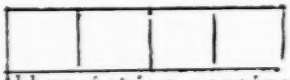
Statement of what's owed

Type of letter sent to end a romance



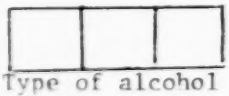
Sharp device on wire

Slang for bathroom



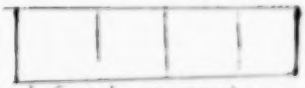
Flower

Abbreviation meaning most



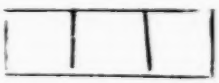
Flower

Type of alcohol



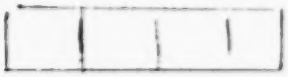
Award for best movie

Sandwich--ground beef, barbecue sauce, spices

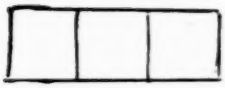


Award for best TV show

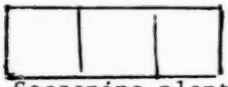
Denims



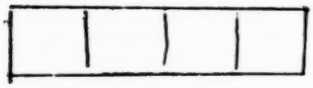
Take someone to court for damages



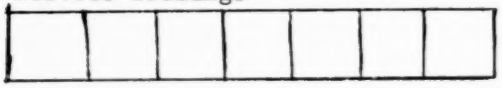
Dive for apples in a tub



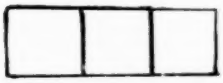
Seasoning plant



Nervous feelings

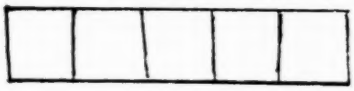


Mafia leader



Type of glue

Thin toast served cold like crackers



No man is an Island

Grace Warren, Pacoima, CA

Objective: Students will be able to analyze a metaphor used in two different ways in two works of poetry.

Procedure:

1. Ask students to write a one to two sentence answer to the question, "What is the loneliest thing you can think of?" This could be a place, a person, a thing, a feeling, or a time of the day.
2. Collect their responses and combine them to form a composite poem. (The teacher can do this himself at home or with the class.) The composite poem is not shown to the students, however, until the end of the lesson.
3. Discuss the students' ideas of loneliness. List recurring images on the chalkboard.
4. Introduce the image of an island or a rock symbolizing loneliness if it was not suggested by one of the students. As an example of a poem which uses this image, play a recording of Paul Simon's "I Am a Rock." This is available in "Simon and Garfunkel's Greatest Hits." (Columbia Records)
5. Discuss Simon's use of the island/rock image. Call attention to other words in the song--shroud, fortress, walls, shield, womb, armor--which strengthen his portrait of isolation.
6. Now, pass out a copy of John Donne's poem "No Man Is an Island" written in 1623. Ask the students to explain the island/rock image used here.
7. If possible, show the film "No Man Is an Island" narrated by Orson Wells. This film recites the poem while showing pictures of people reaching out to help the old, the handicapped, the very young, the mentally ill. The film is 11 minutes long and is available from Dana Productions, 6249 Babcock Ave., North Hollywood CA 91606.
8. In the discussion following the poem, point out that Donne uses the same metaphor of an island/rock to symbolize exactly the opposite of what Simon uses it for. In this poem, the rock is a piece of the entire continent. If it washes away, all Europe suffers. Thus, no man is alone, every man is a part of humanity, and all suffer from his death.
9. Have students compare and contrast the two poems. Ask them why they feel an island or rock is particularly suited for use as an image of isolation.

Ask them why they think Paul Simon (writing in the 70s) might have used the island/rock image to symbolize his "walled in" isolation. Ask them what they feel is happening in our society today to cause many people to feel isolated from each other.

10. Distribute copies of the class's composite poem and discuss it in relation to the other two poems.

THESAURUS

Jane P. Fenn, Davis, CA

Purpose: To introduce or reinforce thesaurus use
To write some couplets or cinquains

Materials: Writing materials and a Thesaurus for each student
Butcher paper and marking pens

Procedure: Before writing

1. Explain Thesaurus development and use
2. Demonstrate both dictionary and indexed forms, look up words with the class and stress the variety of synonyms given and forms used
3. Explain the couplet as a poetic form using a characteristic rhyme and rhythm pattern
4. Explain the cinquain as a five-line poetic form using the following pattern:
   First line--contains one word the writer is focusing on
   Second line--contains two words related to the first in some way, e.g. synonyms or an explanatory or associated phrase
   Third line--contains three words, as above
   Fourth line--contains four words, as above
   Fifth line--contains a one-word synonym for the original word
5. Read with students some examples of both forms written with a thesaurus
6. Assign students to write thesaurus poems. Three or four will probably take fifty minutes. They should begin by looking up words, listing synonyms, and "playing" with the words and related meanings and phrases that come to mind, trying both forms with them. It is helpful if the teacher demonstrates this with a word--perhaps even having the students suggest a word as a starting point.
7. Make a joke out of asking them to keep it clean and to avoid using people's names--if you think that could be a problem.

During writing

1. Provide help to individuals as needed.
2. Praise and encourage. It helps students to enjoy this creative activity if they see you obviously enjoying what they have written.

After writing

1. Choose some of the results to write on large pieces of paper and post on the wall. There are bound to be a great many winners.
2. Compile a class poetry book and add these to it.
3. Encourage students to submit good ones to poetry contests.
4. Have a contest of your own.

Sample poems:

RAIN
Shower, storm, drizzle, downpour
Rain beats softly against my door.

TIGHTWAD
Stewardly, thrifty, careful, economizing
Spend too much and he'll be agonizing.

GHOST
Phantom appears
Vampire bites neck
Spirit comes to life
Spook

lit thru pix

Ruth Sharrer, Zanesville, OH

I use photography to teach literature concepts. I could have chosen other methods, but this was an approach the students enjoyed. The idea of using a camera to learn literature intrigued them. The students had trouble with point of view. They could define it, but they really could not understand why this would influence the story.

I start by dividing the class into groups, usually composed of four students. I try to make sure there is one student in each who can provide leadership. Each group then selects a secretary who keeps a written record of the group's activities and writes, with the group's help, the final report.We then discuss possible characters they can become. I usually offer some suggestions, like a small child or a giant, an old man, someone who is handicapped. Often students will suggest other possibilities. The most unusual I've had was to be a trashcan.

After all the groups have decided what character they will assume, we then talk about how this character would "see" the things around him, For instance, a small child would see things from below, which would necessitate a way of looking up. After we have discussed the limitations placed on their character, they then decide what their character would be likely to see and which I then go over with them. They compose a list of 12-15 possible pictures. They are then ready to take the actual pictures. We usually take black and white because the film is cheaper to buy and develop. To cover this cost, we sometimes have bake sales.

After the pictures were developed, they mounted them on cardboard with a caption for each. Each group then wrote up an explanation of the character, and how being that character affected what they could see, could not see, and how they looked at things, in other words, point of view. There are limitations to this assignment, but the students generally have a better idea of point of view, and they have a good time doing the assignment.

I have also used photography to help illustrate plot steps and chronological order with 8th grade students. The procedure for setting up the groups is the same. This assignment is not as difficult as the other, but it usually leads to a writing assignment also. We start by discussing what plot is and what chronological order is. Then I tell them that they are going to tell a story through pictures. Each group has to decide on a story line. If they could not think of one, I would offer suggestions. They would write up a brief outline of their story and, since they only had 12 pictures to take, they would decide what twelve pictures were most necessary to telling that story. They had a lot of fun staging their pictures and using their classmates in them. After the pictures were developed, they mounted them on cardboard--with NO captions. After all groups were finished, each student had to choose one of the picture stories and write up a story based on the plot steps shown. We then read them in class. It was interesting to see how closely these stories came to the original group's story.

PLAYTEX??

Trish Macior, San Jose, CA

This rule pertains to the use and punctuation of conjunctive adverbs. When teaching methods of joining independent clauses by use of conjunctive adverbs, begin the lesson by asking students what the word "Playtex" brings to mind! After some suppressed laughter, someone will eventually bring up "girdle!" You then ask volunteers to state the PURPOSE of such a garment. Stop when someone says something like "to hold you in!" You agree and humorously add--"Does it hold you in on just one side?"

The conjunctive adverbs are then listed on the board and students are shown that, just like a girdle holds you in on both sides, these adverbs, which need to join two independent clauses, must be "held in" by means of punctuation on both sides. The adverb is preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma: it is "surrounded" by punctuation!

; however, ; thus,
; therefore, ; furthermore,
; nevertheless,

One point to stress is that this rule only holds when the conjunctive adverb is placed between two independent clauses.

I find that students rarely forget the "Playtex" rule!

ILLITERACY

Pam Williams, Sacramento, CA

Here is a short check for hidden illiteracy in your classroom. Hidden illiteracy is the result of going past words that you do not understand as if you did understand them. In other words, a person thinks he knows something; but when it is time to apply that knowledge, or explain it to someone, he starts having problems doing so. Try this test on your students, or fellow teachers.

1. Have a person read the "Pledge of Allegiance" even though he insists he knows it by heart. There is no time limit to this test, and a person may use the dictionary. This is a check for hidden illiteracy, not just plain illiteracy. Do not coach a person on the test.
2. Ask these five questions:
   a. What does "allegiance" mean? Use the word allegiance in a sentence.
   b. What does "under" mean in this context?
   c. What is a republic?
   d. What is the antecedent of "it"?
   e. Why is our country called the United States of America?

The answers can be found in a dictionary or/and a government text book. You may have students correct their own tests, but look to see how prevalent hidden illiteracy is in your class. Any complaints you get about this test being stupid, signs of boredom, people trying to leave class, and some students being hostile by the end of the quiz are all phenomena connected to hidden illiteracy. This might give you a clue to why test scores and literacy rates are dropping.

BE IT EVER SO

Tom Cobb, St. Louis, MO

For this assignment I use three real estate ads from the New York Times Magazine. A quick look would show you that they are for residences that your students are unlikely to live in (prices from $595,000 to $3,500,000); thus, they can be used for a few moments of fantasy which can be useful for free writing or descriptive writing.

I use these ads for a 10-15 minute free-writing exercise. I tell the students to study the ads. pick one of the houses, buy it, move in, and tell me about themselves as the person who lives there. This gives them a chance to do something we all enjoy, to pretend we are wealthy. The results can be amusing, surprising, even touching. One student described her round bed with its purple, satin spread and her parties which included inviting the mayor over to play

pool. Another, rather than being simply rich, was a world famous scientist working on a cure for cancer. Yet another became a famous actress who could now live in comfort with her mother and brother and give them all the things the family could never afford.

Other teachers have used the ads to work on descriptive writing, having the student choose a house, then a room in the house to describe completely. These descriptions usually show clearly that adolescent decorators have, at best, very eclectic tastes.

REVIEW

Jane Weinhaus, University City, MO

The review game described can be used grades 4-12 for all ability levels. It helps both students and the teacher prepare for a test.

TWO DAYS BEFORE A TEST

The last half hour of the period, direct the class as follows:

To prepare for the test on_____, please start studying your notes now. As you go through the material we have covered, write down ten questions that you think would be fair ones for the test. These questions are to ne handed in at the end of the period.

That night use the lists of questions as you see fit. Perhaps, if you are like me, you may still need to make up the test.

THE DAY BEFORE A TEST

Give the lists back to the students.
Place three desks in front of the room and ask for volunteers (X, Y and Z)
Procedure: Go around the room in order.
Student one, using his list, asks X a question.
If X knows the answer, student two asks Y a question.
If Y knows the answer, student three asks Z a question.
Student four starts over again with X.

If X, Y, or Z cannot answer, the student who asks the question must supply the answer. He then replaces the panel member who has missed and is the new X, Y, or Z.

Set a time for the game to end. The three sitting in the desks at the front of the room at that time are the winners.

To keep the pace flowing:
If a student demurs, or is not ready, go on to the next one.
If the questioning starts to slow down toward the end of the hour, take questions from volunteers--the competitive ones.

Beve Jellison

Write a short story using one of the following:
He had survived the crash...but where was he? And...was he alone?
Twenty minutes after popping the pill, the room began to spin.
He nearly fainted! He had just won $20,000 with one roll of the dice.
She couldn't believe her ears. Why would Lee be calling her?
Eating the berries outside of room 113 had been a bad idea. He was now half his original size and still shrinking.
Smith was sitting at his breakfast table one morning when he was astounded to see in the paper an announcement of his own death.